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Monterey, California



THESIS

**BUSINESS STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND THE
U.S. MARINE CORPS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE
APPLICABILITY OF SELECTED CONCEPTS**

by

Robert H. Willis, Jr.

December 1999

Principal Advisor:

Nancy C. Roberts

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U.S. MARINE CORPS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE
APPLICABILITY OF SELECTED CONCEPTS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the applicability of three selected business strategic management concepts within the United States Marine Corps at the battalion level of command. My study includes a review of forty strategic management concepts, the identification of fifteen recent developments, and the rationale behind the selection of the three concepts used in this study. The three concepts are: Core Competence Leadership, Scenario Planning and Strategic Intent. My field research consisted of telephone interviews with twelve Marine Corps leaders to discuss applicability of these three concepts at the battalion level of command. The Marine leaders interviewed are not identified in the thesis, but their comments are recorded in the raw data appendix. Overall, of the three concepts, only Core Competence Leadership was found to be applicable at the battalion level of command. In general, the Marine leaders interviewed felt these three concepts were either a higher headquarters function, or already covered under current Marine Corps leadership practices. I recommend further research to examine the potential benefits of a Core Competence approach to leadership within the Marine Corps.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

I believe the downsizing, restructuring and reengineering that characterized much of the business world in the late 1980s and 1990s reflected a leadership failure on the part of business managers to keep up with the accelerating pace of industry change. Their prior preparation and planning was insufficient to occupy today's "competitive high ground." The field of strategic management contains many concepts which focus on preparing for the long term. This thesis suggests that selected business strategic management concepts may be applicable in the United States Marine Corps. Use of these concepts may assist Marine leaders to be proactive in "imagining and creating the future" vice reacting to it. **The purpose of this thesis is to identify the applicability of three selected business strategic management concepts within the United States Marine Corps at the battalion level of command.**

B. BACKGROUND

The field of strategic management has become a vibrant area of business research. Strategic management can be defined as the "art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives" (David, 1999, p. 5).

Strickland lists the following advantages of strategic management:

1. Providing better guidance to the entire organization on the crucial point of what it is we are trying to do and to achieve.
2. Making managers more alert to the winds of change, new opportunities and threatening developments.
3. Providing managers with a rationale for evaluating competing budget requests for investment capital and new staff-a rationale that argues strongly for steering resources into strategy-supportive, results-producing areas.
4. Helping to unify the numerous strategy-related decisions by managers across the organization.
5. Creating a more proactive management posture and counteracting tendencies for decisions to be reactive and defensive (Strickland, 1999, p. 24).

A considerable body of strategic management theory now exists. It focuses specifically on the management of firms and businesses. The field seeks to improve understanding about how general managers formulate and implement strategies that lead to sustained competitive advantage (set of factors or capabilities that allows firms to consistently outperform their rivals).

This study surveys the field of strategic management in an attempt to identify concepts which may be beneficial to the Marine Corps specifically at the battalion level of command. I realize that it may seem odd to see the word "strategic" and "battalion" in the same sentence. An underlying thought motivating my thesis is the belief that the Marine Corps can do a better job training its leaders to be future thinkers. I consider Marine leaders to be experts at

crisis management and planning in the short- and near terms. I think that as an organization, Marine leaders at the battalion level of command and below are neither trained, nor encouraged to prepare for the longer term (for a battalion 3 to 5 years). To the contrary, their mission, requirements and organizational structure are focused on the short term (less than 18 to 24 months). These Marine leaders are groomed to operate in a "box" of predetermined training and operational requirements. This short-term focus may be necessary to accomplish the demanding missions at the battalion level of command, but I question whether this is healthy for the overall well being of the Marine Corps. An organization whose leadership is forged in and confined to a view of the short-term will be challenged to develop the "out of the box" thinkers and long range planners required to deal with a rapidly changing and uncertain future.

In this study, I selected three strategic management concepts from current literature which I believe show potential for Marine Corps use at the battalion level of command. These concepts are: Core Competence Leadership, Scenario Planning, and Strategic Intent. I then surveyed a sample of Marine leaders to discuss applicability.

C. SCOPE LIMITATIONS

The field of strategic management is vast. In their 1998 book, *Strategy Safari*, Mintzburg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998), identify ten schools of strategic management thought. In my thesis, I identified forty current strategic

management concepts. I do not claim to list all the concepts in this broad field. Additionally, there are several recent strategic management developments which I identify but do not use during this study. These concepts may be candidates for future research.

D. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The business strategic management concept of Core Competence Leadership is applicable at the battalion level of command. The concepts of Scenario Planning and Strategic Intent were not found to be applicable at the battalion level of command. These two concepts were found to be more applicable at higher headquarters.

E. THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter I, *Introduction*, provides an overview of this study. It introduces the field of strategic management. Chapter II, *Literature Review*, reviews a basic strategic management model, identifies forty strategic management concepts, identifies fifteen recent concepts and then selects and defines the three recent concepts used in this study. Chapter III, *Methodology*, outlines the research methodology used to conduct this study. Chapter IV, *Data*, provides a summary of the interview data. Chapter V, *Analysis*, provides my interpretation of the interviews. Chapter VI, *Conclusion*, provides my summary and recommendations. Appendix A, *Glossary of Strategic Management Concepts*, contains a discussion of forty strategic management concepts. Appendix B, *Concept Definition Sheets*,

contains the information package received by Marine leaders prior to their interview. Appendix C, *Raw Data*, contains the raw data obtained during the telephone interviews.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

The field of business strategic management is vast. It contains several diverse "schools of thought" and a wealth of interesting perspectives, concepts and analytical tools. It is up to discerning individuals to pick and choose which tools to pack into their leadership toolbox. The objective of this chapter is to survey the field of business strategic management to select three recently popular concepts for the purpose of this study. Additionally, in this Chapter, I provide some additional background information concerning the strategic management process.

The chapter begins with a review of a basic strategic management model. Next, I provide a "laundry list" of forty general strategic management concepts. These concepts are listed and discussed in Appendix A, *Glossary of Strategic Management Concepts*. Of these forty concepts, I then identify fifteen considered to be "recent" or "currently popular." Lastly, I select and define three strategic management concepts believed to be most applicable to this study.

B. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT MODEL

Figure 1 represents a "widely accepted, comprehensive model of the strategic management process" (David, 1999, p. 14). The model outlines a practical approach to formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategy. Many strategic planning and management models have been created. It is amazing to see how many are similar to a model presented by George Steiner in 1969. The

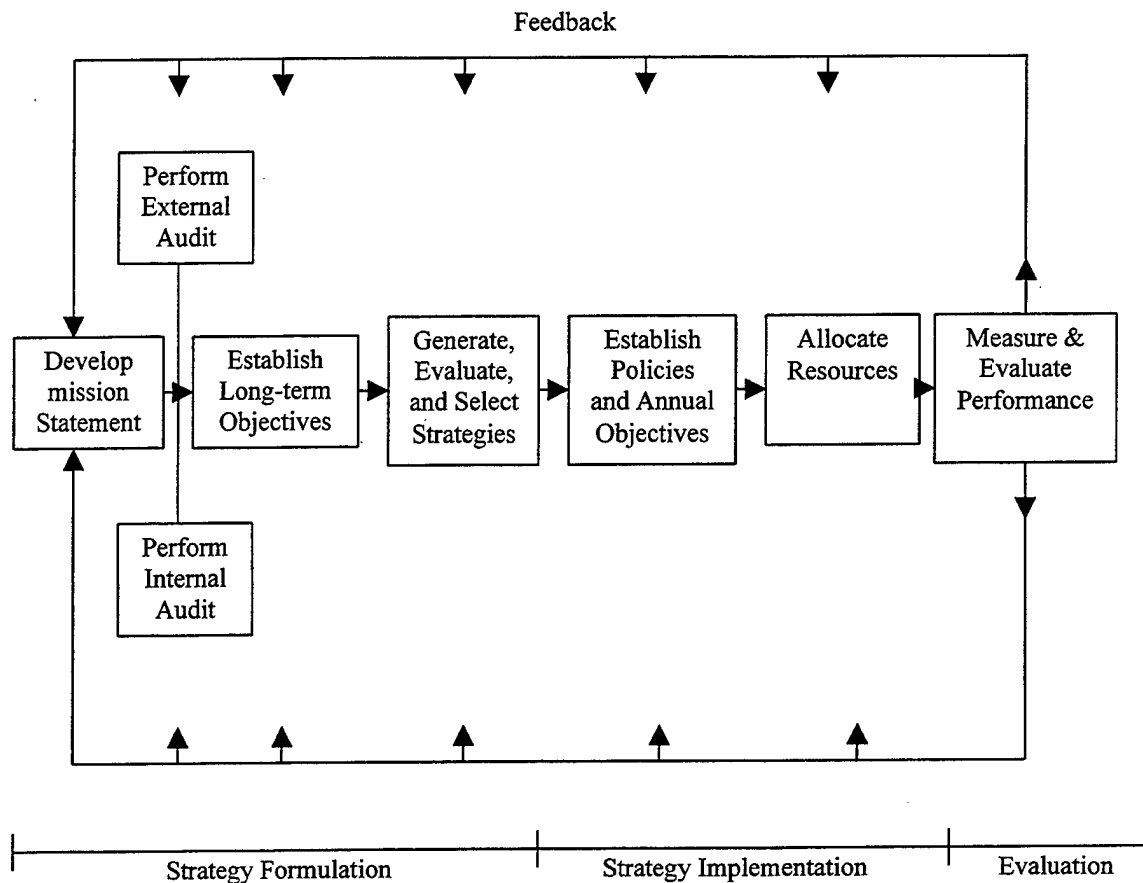


Figure 1. Strategic Management Model

overall process is divided into three phases: strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. A brief explanation of the model is provided below:

1. **Strategy Formulation.** This phase includes developing a business mission, identifying an organization's external opportunities and threats, determining internal strengths and weaknesses, establishing long term objectives, generating alternative strategies, and choosing particular strategies to pursue (David, 1999, p. 5).

2. **Strategy Implementation.** This phase requires a firm to establish annual objectives, devise policies, motivate employees, and allocate resources so that formulated strategies can be executed. Strategy implementation includes developing a strategy-supportive culture, creating an effective organizational structure, redirecting marketing efforts, preparing budgets, developing and utilizing information systems, and linking employee compensation to organizational performance (David, 1999, p. 5).
3. **Strategy Evaluation.** This phase evaluates if strategies are working well. This is important since external and internal factors are constantly changing. Three fundamental strategy evaluation activities are (1) reviewing external and internal factors that are the bases for current strategies, (2) measuring performance, and (3) taking corrective action (David, 1999, p. 5).

C. CONCEPTS IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

During the literature review, I examined over fifty current journal and magazine articles and a number of academic texts and books. This review provided me with a basic understanding of currently popular concepts in the field of strategic management. Listed below are the results of a literature survey of fourteen strategic management books. During the survey, the below listed common strategic management concepts (Table 1) were identified. An "X" signifies that the concept was mentioned in the particular text:

Concepts in Strategic Management	Books on Strategic Management													
	Academic Textbooks							General Reading						
	Anthony & Govindarajan, 1998.	Bourgeois, Duhaime & Stimpert, 1999.	David, 1999.	Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 1999.	Kosseck & Block, 2000.	Pearce & Robinson, 2000.	Pitts & Lei, 2000.	Strickland, 1999.	Doz & Hamel, 1998.	Dyson & O'Brien, 1998.	Hamel & Prahalad, 1994.	Mintzburg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1998.	Porter, 1980.	Porter, 1985.
Agency Theory	X	X		X		X								
Balanced Scorecard	X					X			X	X				
Benchmarking	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X			
Coalitions						X			X		X	X		X
Competitive Advantage	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Competitor Analysis			X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X
Contingency Planning			X		X	X				X				
Core Competence Leadership / Resource-Based Theory	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Corporate Culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Cross Functional Collaboration/Teams				X	X	X	X	X						
Empowerment			X		X	X	X	X			X			X
Environmental Scanning				X		X	X	X		X		X		
First Mover		X		X			X	X	X					X
Five Forces Model (Porter)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Flexible Manufacturing Systems	X			X		X	X	X			X			
Game Theory										X		X	X	
Generic Strategies (Porter)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Genetic Diversity		X			X						X			
Globalization		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Human Resource Management	X		X	X	X	X	X				X			X
Hypercompetition		X		X			X							
Innovation (Institutionalizing)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
Learning Companies	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X		
Learning Curve		X			X	X	X	X		X	X			X
Mission Statements	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
Network Organizational Form				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Outsourcing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Reengineering		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		
Scenario Planning		X		X	X	X				X		X	X	X

Table 1. Concepts in Strategic Management

Concepts in Strategic Management	Books on Strategic Management											
	Academic Textbooks								General Reading			
	Anthony & Govindarajan, 1998.	Bourgeois, Duhaime & Stimpert, 1999.	David, 1999.	Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 1999.	Kosseck & Block, 2000.	Pearce & Robinson, 2000.	Pitts & Lei, 2000.	Strickland, 1999.	Doz & Hamel, 1998.	Dyson & O'Brien, 1998.	Hamel & Prahalad, 1994.	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1998.
Stakeholder Analysis				X	X	X	X			X		X
Strategic Alliances				X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Strategic Control	X			X		X				X		X
Strategic Groups				X			X	X				X
Strategic Intent		X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
SWOT/TOWS Analysis		X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X
Synergy		X	X	X	X	X	X					
Total Quality Management	X			X	X	X	X	X			X	
Uncertainty	X			X	X		X		X	X		X
Value Chain Analysis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vision/Strategic Vision		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

Table 1 (Continued)

Each of these forty concepts is defined in the *Glossary of Strategic Management Concepts* contained in Appendix A.

D. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Of the forty concepts identified above, I performed an additional survey to identify which concepts seem to be enjoying current popularity. Each "X" annotated in Table 2 represents a statement by the book's author that the identified concept is either a "recent" development, enjoying a "good deal of interest,"

"much in vogue," "a current fad," an "emerging perspective," a "cutting-edge concept," or has gained "recent popularity."

Recent Developments in Strategic Management	Books on Strategic Management													
	Academic Textbooks							General Reading						
	Anthony & Govindarajan, 1998.	Bourgeois, Duhaime & Stimpert, 1999.	David, 1999.	Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 1999.	Kosseck & Block, 2000.	Pearce & Robinson, 2000.	Pitts & Lei, 2000.	Strickland, 1999.	Doz & Hamel, 1998.	Dyson & O'Brien, 1998.	Hamel & Prahalad, 1994.	Mintzburg, Ahlstrand & Lampel, 1998.	Porter, 1980.	Porter, 1985.
Agency Theory						X								
Balanced Scorecard						X								
Core Competence Leadership/Resourced-Based Theory		X				X	X				X	X		
Cross Functional Collaboration/Teams						X	X							
Culture Planning												X		
Genetic Diversity		X			X						X			
Innovation (Institutionalizing)		X		X										
Learning Companies				X			X				X			
Network Organizational Form						X	X					X		
Scenario Planning		X			X							X		
Stakeholder Analysis												X		
Strategic Alliances							X					X		
Strategic Control												X		
Strategic Intent		X									X	X		
Vision/Strategic Vision		X										X		

Table 2. Recent Developments in Strategic Management

E. SELECTED CONCEPTS

1. Rational

The purpose of my literature survey was to identify recent developments in the field of business strategic management which showed potential for use in this study. First, to gain an appreciation of the breadth of concepts, I identified and defined forty concepts. Completing this portion of the research provided me with a general understanding of general concepts. I next identified fifteen concepts considered to be "recent" developments. Of those fifteen, I selected three which I felt were most promising and interesting for the study. The selection of the three concepts were based on my judgement formed through my research and based on my 15 years of experience as an active duty Marine. My criteria for elimination were (1) is the concept already in use, (2) does the concept appear applicable in a military environment, and (3) is the concept interesting and worthy of study.

2. Selected Concepts

The three concepts I selected were:

1. Core Competence Leadership.
2. Scenario Planning.
3. Strategic Intent.

F. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS DEFINED

1. Core Competence Leadership

In their article, *The Core Competence of the Corporation*, Hamel and Prahalad believe that real advantage is found in management's ability to

consolidate corporate wide technologies and production skills into competencies that empower firms to adapt quickly to changing opportunities (Hamel, 1990). In their later book, *Competing for the Future*, they define core competency as "a bundle of skills and technologies that enables a company to provide a particular benefit to customers" (Hamel, 1994, p. 219).

Specific examples of core competence are miniaturization at Sony, logistics management at Federal Express and effective organizational structure at Pepsi. These carefully selected core competencies provide these firms with the flexibility to adapt rapidly to changing environments while maintaining market leadership.

Not all resources and capabilities within a firm are core competencies. Core competencies emerge over time through a process of organizational learning. Core competencies are strategic assets. They are meant to serve the long term. Although a firm may have many resources, capabilities and competencies, they can usually have no more than three or four core competencies.

Strickland quotes four traits concerning core competence from James Quinn's 1992 book, *Intelligent Enterprise*:

1. Core competencies rarely consist of narrow skills or the work efforts of a single department. Rather, they are composites of skills and activities performed at different locations in the firms value chain (a systematic way of examining all the activities a firm performs and how they interact) that, when linked, create unique organizational capability.
2. Because core competencies typically reside in the combined efforts of different work groups, and departments, individual supervisors

and department heads can't be expected to see building the overall corporations core competencies as their responsibility.

3. The key to leveraging a company's core competencies into long-term competitive advantage is concentrating more effort and more talent than rivals on deeping and strengthening these competencies.
4. Because customers' needs change in often-unpredictable ways and the know-how and capabilities needed for competitive success cannot always be accurately forecasted, a company's selected bases of competence need to be broad enough and flexible enough to respond to an unknown future (Strickland, 1999, p. 274).

Strickland states that the multiskill, multiactivity character of core competencies makes building and strengthening them an exercise in (1) managing human skills, knowledge bases, and intellect, and (2) coordinating and networking the efforts of different work groups and departments (Strickland, 1999). For the core competence perspective to take root in an organization, the entire management team must understand and participate in five key management tasks: (1) identifying existing core competencies, (2) establishing a core competence acquisition agenda, (3) building core competencies, (4) deploying core competencies; and (5) protecting and defending core competence leadership (Hamel, 1994).

2. Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is a disciplined method for imagining possible futures. It is based on the assumption that if you cannot predict the future, then by "speculating upon a variety of them, you might open up your mind and even, perhaps, hit upon the right one" (Mintzberg, 1998, p. 58). It is an old tool that has

recently regained popularity in the business world. One reason is the poor track record many business leaders have in making assumptions about the future when uncertainty is involved. Another is the immense uncertainty associated with globalization and the increasing rate of technological change. Many organizations are now spending huge efforts in order to construct scenarios (Mante-Meijer, 1998).

Scenario planning captures and assesses the impact of uncertainties in an organization's external environment over some future time period. Usually developed in sets, each scenario describes the behavior of a collection of key uncertain factors. The collection of scenarios is intended to capture the range of possible future developments.

The classic example of successful scenario planning is the case of Royal Dutch/Shell. In a 1985 article by Pierre Wack, the Harvard Business Review summarizes:

By listening to planners' analysis of the global business environment, Shell's management was prepared for the eventuality-if not the timing-of the 1973 oil crisis. And again in 1981, when other oil companies stockpiled reserves in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, Shell sold off its excess before the glut became a reality and prices collapsed (Wack, 1985, p. 73).

Wack explains that to be effective, decision scenarios must involve top and middle managers in understanding the changing business environment more intimately than they would in the traditional planning process:

Scenarios help managers structure uncertainty when (1) they are based on a sound analysis of reality, and (2) they change the decision makers' assumptions about how the world works and compel them to reorganize their mental model of reality. This process entails much more than simply designing good scenarios. A willingness to face uncertainty and to understand the forces driving it requires an almost revolutionary transformation in an organization. This transformation process is as important as the development of the scenarios themselves (Wack, 1985, p. 74).

Scenario planning is applicable in almost any situation a decision-maker would like to imagine how the future might unfold. The advantage of scenario planning is that managers are forced to acknowledge the possibility of a variety of different outcomes. Because they are involved in the development of different sets of strategies, managers are forced to consider a much broader range of alternatives. This reduces the tendency for managers to become attached to a single course of action.

3. Strategic Intent

In their 1989 Harvard Business Review article, Hamel and Prahalad introduce the term "strategic intent:"

On the one hand, strategic intent envisions a desired leadership position and establishes the criterion the organization will use to chart its progress. Komatsu set out to "Encircle Caterpillar." Canon sought to "Beat Xerox." Honda strove to become a second Ford-an automotive pioneer. All are expressions of strategic intent.

At the same time, strategic intent is more than simply unfettered ambition. (Many companies possess an ambitious strategic intent yet fall short of their goals.) The concept also encompasses an active management process that includes: focusing the organization's attention on the essence of winning; motivating

people by communicating the value of the target; leaving room for individual and team contributions; sustaining enthusiasm by providing new operational definitions as circumstances change; and using intent consistently to guide resource allocations (Hamel, 1989, p. 32).

Strategic intent is a tangible goal; it is a destination that can be described. The time horizon underlying it is long term. Ambitious firms may pursue it relentlessly, sometimes even obsessively, over a 10- to 20-year period (Strickland, 1999). It lengthens the organization's attention span and provides consistency to short-term action, while leaving room for reinterpretation as new opportunities emerge.

Strategic intent implies a sizable stretch for an organization. It creates an intentional misfit between resources and ambitions. This forces the organization to be inventive. Top management challenges the organization to close the gap by systematically building new advantages:

In this respect, strategic intent is like a marathon run in 400-meter sprints. No one knows what the terrain will look like at mile 26, so the role of top management is to focus the organization's attention on the ground to be covered in the next 400 meters (Hamel, 1989, p. 33).

Firms achieve progress through issuing challenges; each specifying the next key advantage or capability to be built. One year the challenge may be quality, the next cycle time, and the next mastery of a new technology, etc.

Strategic intent assures consistency in resource allocation over the long term. Clearly articulated challenges help focus individual effort in the medium

term. Competitive innovation helps reduce competitive risk in the short term. This consistency in the long term, focus in the medium term, and inventiveness and involvement in the short term provide the key to leveraging limited resources in pursuit of ambitious goals.

Strategic intent should be personalized. Each employee should understand how his or her work contributes towards its achievement. It is as much about creating meaning for employees as it is about establishing direction (Hamel, 1994). Employees should have a personal scorecard that directly relates their job to the challenge being pursued. They should have a specific measure of their own performance that links their individual achievement with the firm's strategic intent.

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III. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct this study. The data required for this research was gathered through two research methods: a literature review of current business strategic management books and articles; and field research consisting of telephone interviews and electronic (email) correspondence with a sample of Marine leaders.

1. Literature Review

The field of strategic management has an ample source of literature. It's academic writings and research has developed at a rapid pace in recent years. In this study, I review eight recent strategic management academic texts and six general topic books. To gain additional insight, I also reviewed over fifty journal and magazine articles. During my review, forty strategic management concepts were identified. Of those forty, fifteen were identified as "recent" or "currently popular," and of those fifteen, three were selected for the purpose of this study.

2. Sample of Marine Leaders

This study analyzes the applicability of three selected strategic management concepts at the battalion level of command. I consider the battalion level of command equivalent to the business level as defined within the field of strategic management. To conduct my analysis, I collected data from a sample of current and former battalion level commanders (see Table 3). Currently, there are 371

battalion level command billets in the Marine Corps.¹ The majority of interviews were arranged through personal contacts within Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC), Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC). Because of time constraints and difficulty obtaining interviews with these busy leaders, I was unable to obtain an adequate sample size to represent the population. Because my sample size is small, I can make no accurate statements about the total population. I can only make conclusions regarding the input received from these twelve Marine Leaders.

Marine Leaders Interviewed		
Interview No.	Rank	Billet
1	Major (Reserve)	Tactician, Author, Planning Theorist
2	Lieutenant Colonel	Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander
3	Lieutenant Colonel	Former Communications Battalion Commander
4	Lieutenant Colonel	Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander
5	Lieutenant Colonel	Former Infantry Battalion Commander
6	Colonel	Former Air Station Commander
7	Lieutenant Colonel	Former Infantry Battalion Commander
8	Lieutenant Colonel	Current Motor Transport Battalion Commander
9	Colonel	Former Infantry Battalion Commander
10	Lieutenant Colonel	Current Headquarters Marine Corps Planner
11	Lieutenant Colonel	Former Infantry Battalion Commander
12	Lieutenant Colonel	Current Supply Battalion Commander

Table 3. Marine Leaders Interviewed

3. Method

The method of data collection used in this study is outlined below:

¹ Based on email correspondence with the Personnel Management Division, Manpower Management Officer Assignments (MMOA). This includes both air and ground battalion level command billets.

a. **Telephone Interviews.** Data were collected through a series of telephone interviews. Interviews were requested and then scheduled via email. Prior to each interview, I explained I would ensure complete anonymity of all information provided. The average interview time was twenty-one minutes. Each Marine leader granted me permission to record their telephone interview.

b. **Procedures.** Prior to the prescheduled telephone interview, each Marine leader received via email a cover letter explaining the interview process and a definition of each of the three strategic management concepts of Core Competence Leadership, Scenario Planning, and Strategic Intent. The cover letter and concept definition sheets used during the interview process are contained in Appendix B.

c. **Questions.** During the telephone interview, I asked each Marine leader the following series of questions concerning each of the three strategic management concepts (Table 4):

Telephone Interview Questions	
a)	Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command (Yes/No)?
b)	If no, why not?
c)	If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?
d)	Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps (Yes/No)?
e)	Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine Leaders (Yes/No)?
f)	How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command (Not Valuable/Valuable/Very Valuable)?

Table 4. Telephone Interview Questions

d. **Responses.** During the telephone interview, each Marine leader answered the above questions (a through f) and also made additional or supporting comments. The answers and additional comments were recorded on a tape recorder, and later transcribed into the raw data section contained in Appendix C.

e. **Coding.** The Marine leader's answers and comments were coded to assist in data analysis. Additional variables were also created to create additional insight. The variables and coded responses are identified in Chapter IV, *Data.*

f. **Analysis.** My analysis of the data is contained in Chapter V, *Analysis.*

IV. DATA

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the data collected during the telephone interviews of Marine leaders. Each Marine leader was asked the below questions (Table 5) concerning each of the selected strategic management concepts of Core Competence Leadership, Scenario Planning, and Strategic Intent:

Telephone Interview Questions	
a)	Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command (Yes/No)?
b)	If no, why not?
c)	If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?
d)	Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps (Yes/No)?
e)	Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine Leaders (Yes/No)?
f)	How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command (Not Valuable/Valuable/Very Valuable)?

Table 5. Telephone Interview Questions

Responses to these questions were divided into three separate categories: Bivariate Responses, Coded Responses, and Creation of New Variables and Codes.

B. BIVARIATE RESPONSES

The following represents a summary of the bivariate data.

1. Responses to Question "a"

Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command (Yes/No)? The responses from this question are summarized in Table 6:

a. Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command? 1 = Yes 2 = No	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12	Summary	
													YES	NO
Core Competence Leadership	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11	1
Scenario Planning	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	6	6
Strategic Intent	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	4	8

Table 6. Responses to Question "a"

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** Eleven of twelve Marine leaders interviewed (92 percent) commented that Core Competence Leadership was applicable at the battalion level of command.

b. **Scenario Planning.** Six of twelve Marine leaders interviewed (50 percent) thought Scenario Planning was applicable at the battalion level of command.

c. **Strategic Intent.** Four of twelve Marine leaders interviewed (25 percent) thought Strategic Intent was applicable at the battalion level of command.

2. Responses to Question "d"

Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps (Yes/No)? The responses from this question are summarized in Table 7:

d. Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps (Yes/No)? 1 = Yes 2 = No	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12	Summary	
													YES	NO
Core Competence Leadership	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	7	5
Scenario Planning	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	7	5
Strategic Intent	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	10

Table 7. Responses to Question "d"

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** Seven of twelve Marine leaders interviewed (58 percent) recommended adopting the term Core Competence Leadership in the Marine Corps.

b. **Scenario Planning.** Seven of twelve Marine leaders interviewed (58 percent) recommended adopting the term Scenario Planning in the Marine Corps.

c. **Strategic Intent.** Two of twelve Marine leaders interviewed (17 percent) recommended adopting the term Strategic Intent in the Marine Corps.

3. Responses to Question "e"

Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine Leaders (Yes/No)? The responses from this question are summarized in Table 8:

e. Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine Leaders (Yes/No)? 1 = Yes 2 = No	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12	Summary	
													YES	NO
Core Competence Leadership	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	7	5
Scenario Planning	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	7	5
Strategic Intent	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	7	5

Table 8. Responses to Question "e"

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** Seven of twelve Marine leaders (58 percent) recommended teaching the concept Core Competence Leadership to Marine leaders.

b. **Scenario Planning.** Seven of twelve Marine leaders (58 percent) recommended teaching the concept Scenario Planning to Marine leaders.

c. **Strategic Intent.** Seven of twelve Marine leaders (58 percent) recommended teaching the concept Strategic Intent to Marine leaders.

C. CODED RESPONSES

The following represents a summary of the coded responses. The following questions were asked (Table 9):

Telephone Interview Questions (Coded Responses)	
	Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command (Yes/No)?
b)	If no, why not?
c)	If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?
f)	How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command (Not Valuable/Valuable/Very Valuable)?

Table 9. Telephone Interview Questions (Coded Responses)

1. Coded Responses to Question "b" in Terms of Applicability

The responses from this question are summarized in Table 10:

b. Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command (Yes/No)? If no, why not? 1 = Process already in place 2 = Higher headquarters function 3 = Dislikes unstructured process 4 = Too time consuming 5 = Time period too far out 6 = Not team oriented 7 = Should not limit to a single focus	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12
Core Competence Leadership							1					
Scenario Planning						2	1	3	2		4	2
Strategic Intent	1/5	5		6	2		5	5	5	2/5		7

Table 10. Coded Responses to Question "b"

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** One of twelve Marine leaders (8 percent) stated that Core Competence Leadership was not applicable at the battalion level of command. He felt that current Marine Corps leadership processes were already in place governing that concept.

b. **Scenario Planning.** Six of twelve Marine leaders (50 percent) felt that Scenario Planning was not applicable at the battalion level of command: three (25 percent) thought it was a function best performed at higher headquarters; one (8 percent) felt the concept was already covered by processes currently in place; one (8 percent) disliked the unstructured "brainstorming" technique; and one (8 percent) thought it was too time consuming.

c. **Strategic Intent.** Nine of twelve Marine leaders (75 percent) thought Strategic Intent was not applicable at the battalion level of command: six

(50 percent) felt the time period was too far out; two (17 percent) thought it was a function best performed at higher headquarters; one (8 percent) felt the concept was already covered by processes currently in place; one (8 percent) did not like the limitations of a single strategic focus; and one (8 percent) felt the concept was not team oriented.

2. Coded Responses to Question “c” in Terms of Applicability

The responses from this question are summarized in Table 11:

c. Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command (Yes/No)? If yes, did you apply it as defined? Can you explain 1 = Applied as defined 2 = Not applied as defined 3 = Not applicable at battalion level	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12
Core Competence Leadership	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	1
Scenario Planning	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
Strategic Intent	2	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3

Table 11. Coded Responses to Question “c”

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** Five of twelve Marine leaders (42 percent) stated they applied the concept of Core Competence Leadership as defined at the battalion level of command. Six (50 percent) stated they applied a similar concept, different in form than the one defined in this study.

b. **Scenario Planning.** None of the twelve Marine leaders interviewed stated they applied the concept of Scenario Planning as defined at the battalion level of command. Six (50 percent) stated they applied a similar concept

(informal "what if" discussions), different in form than the one defined in this study.

c. **Strategic Intent.** One of the twelve Marine leaders (8 percent) stated they applied the concept of Strategic Intent as defined at the battalion level of command. Three (25 percent) stated they applied a similar concept (Commander's Guidance/Intent), different in form than the one defined in this study.

3. Coded Responses to Question "f" in Terms of Value

The responses from this question are summarized in Table 12:

f. How valuable do you think this concept is at the Battalion level of command (Not Valuable/ Valuable/ ery Valuable)?	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12	Arithmetic Mean
1. Not Valuable													
2. Valuable													
3. Very Valuable													
Core Competence Leadership	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	2.5
Scenario Planning	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1.9
Strategic Intent	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.4

Table 12. Coded Responses to Question "f"

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** Eight of twelve Marine leaders (67 percent) stated the concept of Core Competence Leadership was "Very Valuable" at the battalion level of command; two (17 percent) thought it was "Valuable" and two (17 percent) thought it was "Not Valuable."

b. **Scenario Planning.** Three of twelve Marine leaders (25 percent) stated the concept of Scenario Planning was "Very Valuable" at the

battalion level of command; five (42 percent) thought it was "Valuable"; and four (33 percent) thought it was "Not Valuable."

c. **Strategic Intent.** One of twelve Marine leaders (8 percent) stated the concept of strategic intent was "Very Valuable" at the battalion level of command; three (25 percent) thought it was "Valuable", and eight (67 percent) thought it was "not valuable."

D. CREATION OF NEW VARIABLES AND CODES

To add extra insight, two additional variables were created: negative and positive comments. Marine leader comments were coded and are recorded in Tables 13 and 14.

1. Negative Comments

Negative Comments	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12
1 = Does not like internal focus												
2 = Duplication of current practices												
3 = Just another "buzzword"												
4 = Higher headquarters function												
5 = Leaders don't understand it												
6 = More applicable in Service Support												
7 = Better applied "informally"												
8 = Consumes too much time												
9 = Dislikes unstructured process												
10 = Term is too long												
11 = Leadership practices confined to tour of commander												
12 = Not team oriented												
13 = Should not limit to a single focus												
Core Competence Leadership	1/2	3/4	5/6		2/3/6		2	4/2	2	2	2	
Scenario Planning		7		4/7	2/3	4/2	2/4	9/2	4	7	8/4	4
Strategic Intent	10/2	10	10/11	12	4	4/2	4/10	10	4/10	4/10	4	13

Table 13. Negative Comments

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** The following negative comments were made concerning the topic of Core Competence Leadership: Seven of twelve Marine leaders (58 percent) stated that the concept of Core Competence leadership was a duplication of current practices; two (17 percent) stated that it was a function better performed by higher headquarters; two (17 percent) stated that it was just another passing "buzzword"; two (17 percent) stated that it was more applicable in a service support environment; one (8 percent) stated that he felt most Marine leaders don't understand the concept; and one (8 percent) stated he did not like the internal focus. He believed the focus should be on the enemy.

b. **Scenario Planning.** The following negative comments were made concerning the topic of Scenario Planning: Six of twelve Marine leaders (50 percent) stated the concept of Scenario Planning was a function better performed by higher headquarters; four (33 percent) stated it was a duplication of current practices; three (25 percent) stated it was better applied "informally" at the battalion level of command; one (8 percent) stated it was too time consuming; one (8 percent) stated that he disliked the unstructured process of decision making; and one (8 percent) stated that he thought this term was just another passing "buzzword."

c. **Strategic Intent.** The following negative comments were made concerning the topic of Strategic Intent. Seven of twelve Marine leaders

(58 percent) stated the term as defined (10-20 years) was too long at the battalion level of command; six (50 percent) thought it was a function better performed by higher headquarters; one (8 percent) stated it was a duplication of current practices; one (8 percent) stated that the Marine ethos limited leadership practices at the battalion level of command to the tour of the commander; one (8 percent) stated the concept was not team oriented; one (8 percent) stated a battalion should not be limited to a single strategic focus.

2. Positive Comments

Positive Comments	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12
1 = Have been trying to do for 20 years 2 = Requires a change in paradigm 3 = Helps deal with change 4 = Helps develop focus/goals 5 = Commander should get involved in decisions 6 = Idea is worthwhile 7 = Valuable to the extent of keeping commanders informed 8 = Anytime spent examining the future is valuable 9 = Crucial up to 2 years												
Core Competence Leadership		1	2							3		4
Scenario Planning	5		6	7	8							
Strategic Intent			9									

Table 14. Positive Comments

a. **Core Competence Leadership.** The following positive comments were made concerning the topic of Core Competence Leadership: one (8 percent) Marine leader stated he had been trying to incorporate this leadership perspective over his entire 20 years of military service; one (8 percent) stated that

the adoption of this concept would require a change in the paradigm of current Marine leadership thinking; one (8 percent) stated he felt this concept would assist the Marine Corps deal with change; and one (8 percent) stated he felt this concept would help the Marine Corps develop focus and goals.

b. **Scenario Planning.** The following positive comments were made concerning the topic of Scenario Planning: one (8 percent) Marine leader stated he felt this concept would involve commanders more in the decision making process; one (8 percent) stated the idea was worthwhile; one (8 percent) stated the idea was valuable to the extent of keeping commanders informed; and one (8 percent) stated that any time spent examining the future is valuable.

c. **Strategic Intent.** The following positive comments were made concerning the topic of Strategic Intent: One (8 percent) stated that Strategic Intent is crucial but at the battalion level of command was applicable only up to 2 years.

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V. ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents my analysis of the data collected during the telephone interviews of Marine leaders.

B. APPLICABILITY

According to the twelve interviews, the strategic management concept of Core Competence Leadership is applicable at the battalion level of command. The concepts of Scenario Planning and Strategic Intent were not found to be applicable at the battalion level of command. These two concepts were found to be more applicable at higher headquarters.

Overall, the three selected strategic management concepts of Core Competence Leadership, Scenario Planning, and Strategic Intent were not widely supported during the interviews. Marines appear to be skeptical of these business concepts. This skepticism surfaced during the interviews, when several Marines referred to these three concepts as "buzzwords." In addition, a majority expressed their belief these three concepts were covered in their battle-proven leadership traits, principles, and basic doctrine.

1. Core Competence Leadership

Of the three concepts, Core Competence Leadership was the best received. Unknown to me prior to the interviews, it seems the term is currently being used within the Marine Corps. Three of the Marine leaders interviewed had recently become familiar with the concept through official channels. All Marine leaders agreed the concept was

applicable at the battalion level of command (the one who did not said the concept was already being applied under another name). Several Marine leaders said they had applied the concept as defined.

In the analysis of negative comments, a trend appeared indicating that many thought this concept was just a new name to cover current practices. I speculate there might have been a problem of concept interpretation during the interviews. I feel this way, because during my research, it took me awhile to understand the depth of this concept. Hamel and Prahalad admit during their research, "...many companies are confused over just what is, and is not, a core competence" (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994, p. 223). During the interviews, many leaders identified competencies, but were they truly their unit's "core competencies?" Were the competencies identified a "vital common thread" throughout their organization? During an interview, one Marine leader familiar with the concept stated, "A lot of people think they understand the term core competence, but in a lot of cases what they are doing is "stove piping it." In other words, they are not recognizing that a core competence resides in the "sum of learning across individual skill sets and individual organizational units" (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994, p 223). Also in service support, does the core competence make a significant contribution to "value perceived by the customer? (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994, p. 225). And if core competencies were successfully identified, did top leaders take an active role to manage and "nurture" them. To the contrary, I think a lot of valuable senior leadership time is

spent managing lower priority capabilities or "stove pipe" expertise at the expense of focusing on true core competencies.

A majority of Marine leaders interviewed thought this concept was "very valuable" at the battalion level of command. Regardless of this high rating, only slightly more than half thought the term should be officially adopted and taught formally.

2. Scenario Planning

The concept of Scenario Planning was well received but not for formal use at the battalion level of command. Many thought the military already has a version of scenario planning called: wargaming, branches and sequels, contingency planning, or courses of action. Half of the Marine leaders interviewed believed this concept to be applicable at the battalion level of command, but none had applied it as defined by the concept definition sheet. However, half did state they regularly use their own informal version in the form of "what-if" discussions.

In the analysis of negative comments, a trend appeared indicating that many of the Marine leaders thought this concept was more appropriate as a function of higher headquarters. They did not like the time commitment required to develop the scenarios, set up the meetings, discuss, and record the results. They thought the formalization of the process was unappealing at the battalion level of command.

The majority of Marine leaders did not place a high value on the use of this concept at the battalion level of command. However, slightly more than half thought the term should be officially adopted and taught to Marine leaders.

3. Strategic Intent

The concept of Strategic Intent was not well received. A majority of Marine leaders thought the term was not applicable at the battalion level of command and only one said he had applied the concept as defined. It was interesting to note, the Marine leader who applied the concept was a Communications battalion commander who had contracted a private consultant to conduct strategic management training for his staff (core competence development, strategic vision, and long range objectives). I think this reflects the difficulty of planning in the rapidly changing field of information technology. This trend is similar in the business world as firms try to compete in the hypercompetitive information technology markets.

In the analysis of negative comments, a trend appeared indicating that many of the Marine leaders thought the time period of this concept was too long. They felt a period of 18 to 24 months was better suited for use at the battalion level. Also, a trend appeared indicating that many felt this concept was more appropriate at higher headquarters.

A majority of Marine leaders interviewed thought this concept was "not valuable" at the battalion level of command. A majority recommended that the term not be adopted by the Marine Corps. However, slightly more than half thought the term should be taught formally.

C. EXPLANATION

The following explanations are offered concerning general forces acting against the application of strategic management concepts at the battalion level of command.

1. Type of Unit

An interesting observation that surfaced during the analysis is the relationship between strategic management concept applicability and the particular type of unit (Figure 15). During the interviews, few of the combat arms commanders reacted positively to the strategic management concepts while the Service Support and especially the Communications battalion commander responded more positively.

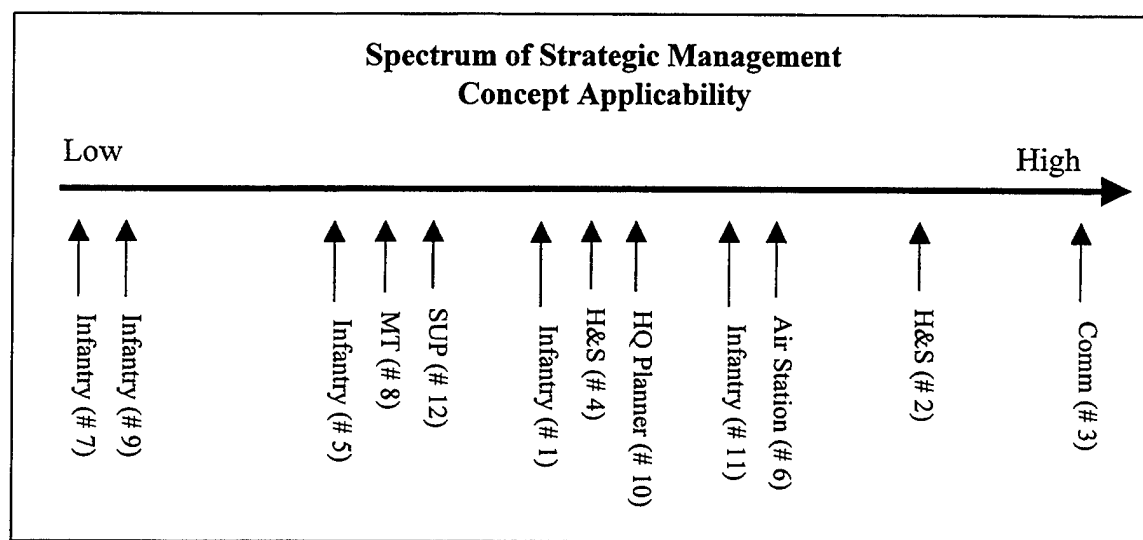


Figure 2. Spectrum of Strategic Management Concept Applicability

I believe this spectrum exists because combat arms units at the battalion level usually have most of their training and operational schedules laid out for them from higher headquarters. Mainly, they are expected to train and then execute in the short-term. However, as you move across the applicability spectrum I believe this view changes. I think applicability rises as we move towards Service Support units because they are "service oriented." Their job is to provide quality service support. Many of their functions are more business-like in nature (supply, maintenance, engineer, medical,

dental) and benefit from the positive effects of long-term planning. To the extreme are the communications units. These units would benefit most from strategic management concepts because of their high operational commitments, challenging maintenance requirements, and most importantly, because of their need to plan for the introduction, operation, and maintenance of new equipment. Their challenge is to manage the rapid diffusion of information technology and its rapid pace of change.

2. 18 to 24 Month Rotation

The Marine Corps command tour rotation of battalion level leaders appears to dissuade the use of strategic management concepts. During the interviews, several Marine leaders commented that the short command period (18 to 24 months) is not long enough to make a lasting impact. I don't believe many business firms seeking competitive advantage would voluntarily rotate its senior management every 18 to 24 months.

3. Clean Slate

Another issue mentioned during an interview is that some battalion commanders are sensitive about setting personal plans or visions to be carried out by future commanders. They expect to have a clean slate. In this leadership environment, the only recognized binding plans and policies are those dictated from above.

4. Higher Headquarters

All agreed they felt strategic management concepts were best applied by higher headquarters. This may be a cause for concern. In the late 1980s, new thinking in the

business world moved formal strategic planning to evolve into strategic management. The shift consisted mainly of placing the responsibility of crafting strategy into the hands of operating managers vice corporate planners. The business world realized that participation of operational managers in the strategic management process was vital to gain the valuable insight and ownership required to create effective plans. This premise was realized in the military recently when policies were created to provide the CINCs with more power to influence their budget priorities in the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) process. The benefits are obvious in tactical planning. But I also think they are as important as other long-term issues, such as the development of a unit capabilities, competencies and vision. I believe higher headquarters should work harder to include battalion level commanders in their long-term planning and development processes.

5. Time

A trend appeared concerning time. Strategic management is time consuming. It competes with the time required to address the fires of the short-term. The majority of Marines interviewed stated their units were undermanned and over tasked. Several Marine leaders did not like the formalized concept processes and time commitments. Many stated they had developed similar, quicker, informal versions. I think it is well understood in both the military and business world, that when activity is brisk, quality planning, especially for the long-term has a tendency to get put aside.

D. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LONG VIEW

The Marine Corps seems to have a system set up which discourages long-term thinking at the battalion level of command. If true, how do Marines develop their expert long-term and out-of-the-box thinkers at higher headquarters? As a warfighting organization, most of the senior leadership comes from a combat arms background. If there is any truth in the Spectrum of Strategic Management Applicability outlined in Figure 2, our senior leaders are not receiving the benefit of practicing the tools and techniques of strategic management until after their battalion level tour of command. Upon transferring to higher headquarters, do Marines expect their leaders to become experts of the long-view after being groomed to excel in handling the day-to-day fires of the short-term. Is there a transformation that happens quickly with some formal schooling, on-the-job training and experience? Or is the long-view a science and an art which is developed and perfected with practice over time? My research suggests there are legitimate techniques and concepts that can be learned and applied to assist the long-term thinker and strategic manager. It is interesting to note that a majority of Marine leaders commented they would recommend teaching the three concepts discussed in this study to Marine leaders. This indicates to me, recognition that strategic management concepts are valued by Marine leaders in the professional military education. It might be in the best interest of the Marine Corps to incorporate a long-view perspective in its leaders throughout their professional development.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to identify the applicability of three selected business strategic management concepts within the United States Marine Corps at the battalion level of command. According to the twelve interviews, the business strategic management concept of Core Competence Leadership is applicable at the battalion level of command. However, the concepts of Scenario Planning and Strategic Intent were not found to be applicable at the battalion level of command. These two concepts were found to be more applicable at higher headquarters.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Applicability Spectrum and Staffing Policy

The pace of change in service support and technology in the 21st Century can only increase. To deal with this change, I recommend the Marine Corps reexamine its battalion command tour length to encourage a longer view in selected units. This issue surfaced several times during the interviews. The Spectrum of Strategic Management Concept Applicability (Figure 2) proposes that each type of battalion is unique and performs functions that require different degrees of strategic management. Some battalions may require no modification of command tour (Combat Arms units), while others may benefit from longer tours (Service Support). The idea is to find the optimal tour length that allows Marine leaders to effectively manage a rate of internal change which can keep pace with the rate of external change.

2. Long-Term and Out-of-the-Box Thinkers

The Marine Corps should teach strategic management or long-term thinking concepts to its Marine Officers throughout their careers. I think long-term thinking builds creativity and helps spawn "out-of-the-box" thinking. During the interviews, a majority supported teaching the strategic management concepts listed in this study to Marine leaders. I think they realize the value of these concepts later in their careers. I also think they recognize the value of those leaders who have mastered the concepts. I recommend teaching selected concepts in strategic management to Marine leaders throughout their professional military education. The goal should be to develop Marine leaders who are experts not only in the art of war, but also in the art of the long-view.

3. Core Competence Leadership

I recommend that the Marine Corps conduct further studies into the possible merits of adopting the concept of core competence leadership. I believe this concept displays potential for Marine Corps use.

4. Scenario Planning

I do not recommend adopting the term scenario planning at the battalion level of command. The Marine Corps has a structured planning process outlined in MCDP 5, *Planning*. I recommend more emphasis on teaching planning processes and techniques formally to Marine leaders throughout their careers. The goal for younger officers should be to become experts in the technique of gaming informal "what if" scenarios.

5. Strategic Intent

I do not recommend adopting the term strategic intent at the battalion level of command. I do, however, recommend adopting a modified version under the name commander's vision. The time period would be the length of the commander's tour. I recommend that higher headquarter units adopt the concept of strategic intent. I believe that every battalion can benefit from a well-defined mission, vision, and strategic plan. To assist busy commanders, I recommend the Marine Corps develop a support team that can be requested to help units develop the long-view, i.e., development of mission and vision statements, external and internal environmental scanning, development of long-term objectives, strategic resource allocation, etc. This strategic management training and support team may reside in higher headquarters or could be outsourced.

C. FOLLOW-ON AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I believe there are many interesting topics for further research concerning the applicability of strategic management concepts in the Marine Corps. Here are several topics I recommend for additional study:

1. Core Competence Leadership

I believe this concept shows potential for Marine Corps use. Apparently, the term is starting to appear in official Marine Corps correspondence. Many of the Marine leaders interviewed felt the Marine Corps already covers this concept in its current leadership practices. Additional research may be useful to identify how core competence leadership differs from current Marine Corps leadership practices. It would also be

interesting to (1) build a core competence checklist that can help Marine leaders to identify and select core competencies, and (2) through an analysis, recommend core competencies for selected Marine Corps units.

2. Strategic Management

The Marine Corps has strategic planners. It would be interesting to identify the level of command that truly performs strategic management for the Marine Corps and compare and contrast their planning techniques with current business strategic management concepts and techniques. How does the Marine Corps stack up to current business practices? This study suggests that little strategic management takes place at the battalion level of command. How would the concepts of Core Competence Leadership, Scenario Planning, and Strategic Intent be received at higher levels of command?

APPENDIX A. GLOSSARY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

AGENCY THEORY. In an organization, it is helpful for managers to understand the problems that can occur involving owners and managerial control. Anthony and Govindarajan state:

An agency relationship exists whenever one party (the principle) hires another party (the agent) to perform some service and, in doing, delegates decision-making authority to the agent (Anthony and Govindarajan, 1998, p. 527).

In this relationship there exists the potential "for the wishes of the owners to be ignored" (Pearce and Robinson, 2000, p. 45). One example is the relationship between stockholders and managers. This relationship is good as long as managers act in ways consistent with stockholder's interests. Problems arise when the interests of managers diverge from those of the owners.

Pearce and Robinson believe that agency problems occur because of the moral hazard problem and adverse selection. The moral hazard problem occurs because (1) owners have access to only a small portion of the information available to executives about the performance of the firm, and (2) since owners cannot monitor every action, executives are often free to pursue their own interests, and may design strategies that provide the greatest possible benefit for themselves (Pierce and Robinson, 2000). Adverse selection refers to the limited ability of stockholders to determine the competencies and priorities of executives at the time they are hired. Pearce and Robinson state the most popular solution to

these two problems is for owners to attempt to align their own interests with those of their agents through the use of executive bonus plans.

Pearce and Robinson outline five problems that may arise in an agency relationship between corporate stockholders and their company's executives:

1. Executives pursue growth in company size rather than in earnings.
2. Executives attempt to diversify their corporate risk.
3. Executives avoid risk.
4. Managers act to optimize their personal payoffs.
5. Executives act to protect their status (Pearce and Robinson, 2000).

There are several solutions to agency problems. These include; defining an agent's responsibilities in a contract, paying executives a premium for their service, providing backloaded compensation, and through the creation of executive teams (Pearce and Robinson, 2000).

BALANCED SCORECARD. In their 1992 Harvard Business Review article, *The Balanced Scorecard-Measures that Drive Performance*, Kaplan and Norton introduce their performance measurement system. The "balanced scorecard" is a set of measures that provide top managers with a balanced presentation of both financial and operational measures in one easy report. Its simple format is meant to minimize information overload (See Figure 3). It provides managers with information from four different perspectives: financial, customer, internal business and innovation. The scorecard is not just a random gathering of performance

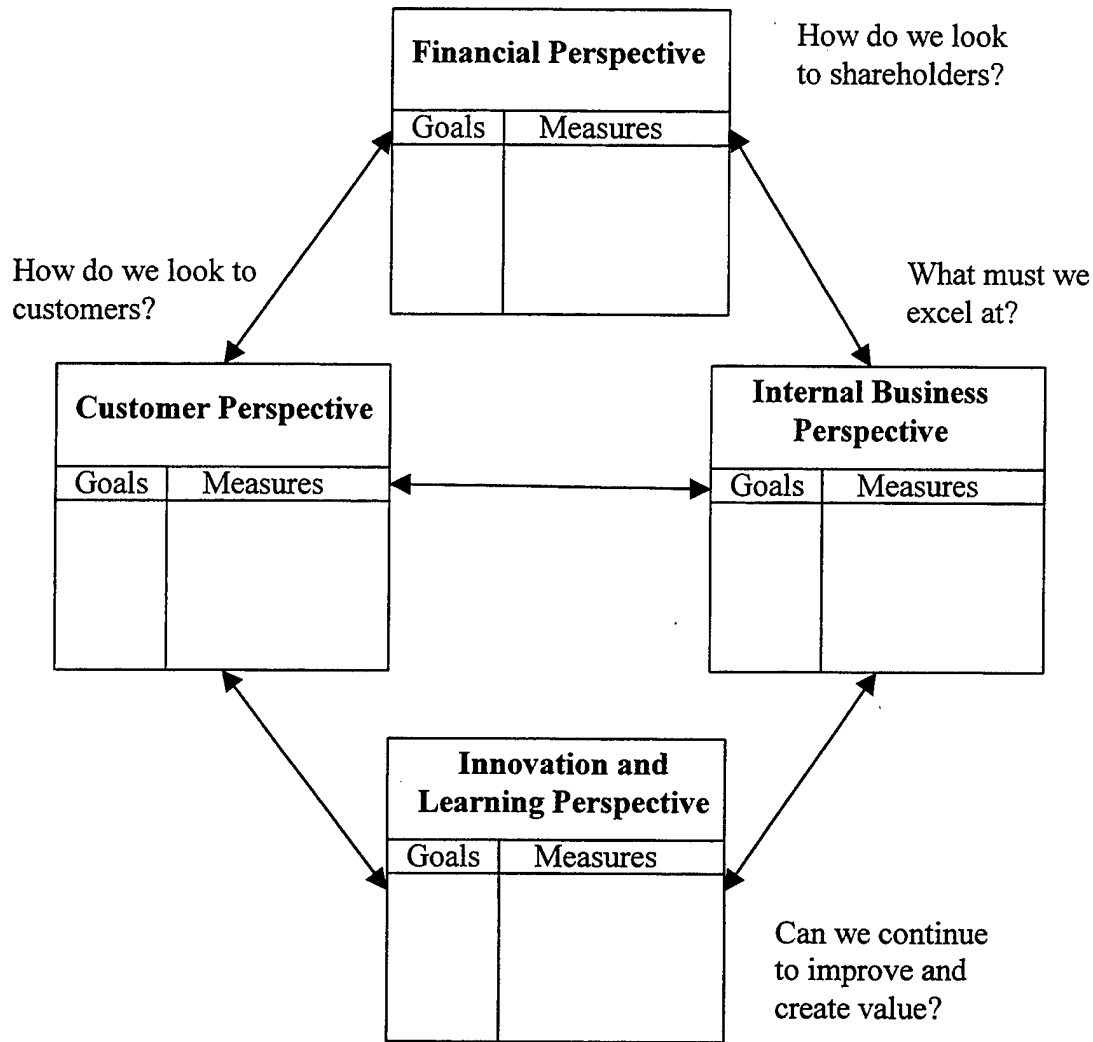


Figure 3. The Balanced Scorecard

measures, rather it can be used as a central organizing framework to translate strategy into operational terms.

In their 1996 article, *Using the Balanced Scorecard as a Strategic Management System*, Kaplan and Norton update the progress of their performance measuring system by observing that many companies are using the balanced scorecard to:

...discover its value as the cornerstone of a new strategic management system. Used this way, the scorecard addresses a serious deficiency in traditional management systems; their inability to link a company's long-term strategy with its short-term actions (Kaplan and Norton, 1996, p. 75).

BENCHMARKING. Bourgeois, Duhaime and Stimpert define benchmarking as the process of:

...comparing and measuring a firm's business processes against the best practices of those processes by any organization in any industry in the entire world" (Bourgeois, Duhaime and Stimpert, 1999, p. 204).

The objective of benchmarking is to accelerate organizational learning (See Figure 4). It helps firms determine if they are operating efficiently, whether their costs are competitive, and which activities and processes they can improve.

During a benchmark analysis, the benchmarker must collect detailed information about best practices (Brownlie, 1999). This may be difficult in a competitive environment. Ideas may be discovered that can be copied quickly, others may take more time. The overall objective is not to simply match a competitor, but to exceed the competition. This is done by deepening organizational learning so firms can develop their own unique competencies.

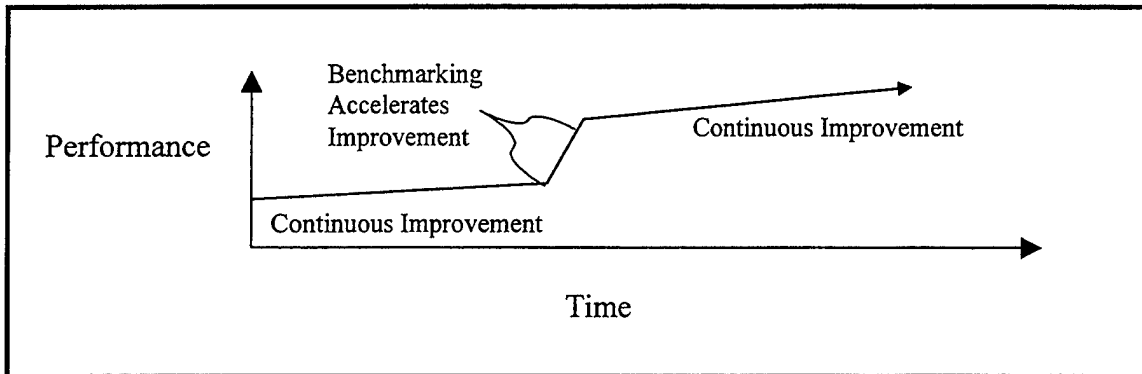


Figure 4. Benchmarking Improves Performance

COALITIONS. In their 1994 book, *Competing for the Future*, Hamel and Prahalad state many of tomorrow's intriguing opportunities will require the integration of skills and capabilities residing in a wide variety of companies. They point out that competition for the future often takes place between coalitions as well as between individual firms. They argue the most obvious reason is that no one firm can possess all the requisite resources to bring about many of the new complicated products and services.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. "The set of factors or capabilities that allow firms to consistently outperform their rivals" (Bourgeois, 1999, p. 56). A firm achieves competitive advantage only if other's efforts to copy its strategy have failed (Hitt, 1999). The aim of strategic management is the development of sustainable competitive advantage.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS. One of several types of analyses conducted of the external environment during the strategy formulation process. Competitor analysis focuses on the companies in which a firm competes directly. Critical to this process is the gathering of competitor intelligence. Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson state the process is used to determine:

1. What drives the competitor as shown by its future objectives;
2. What the competitor is doing and can do as revealed by its current strategy;
3. What the competitor believes about itself and the industry as shown by its assumptions; and
4. What the competitor's capabilities are as shown by its capabilities (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 1999, p. 73).

The information gathered concerning these four questions help strategists prepare an anticipated response for each competitor (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson, 1999).

CONTINGENCY PLANNING. "Alternative plans that can be put into effect if certain key events do not occur as expected" (David, 1999, p. 293). In general, they usually examine only one uncertainty. It presents a base case, and an exception or contingency (Schoemaker, 1995). Usually, only high-priority areas require the insurance of contingency plans. They should be as simple as possible. David suggests effective contingency planning follows a seven-step process:

1. Identify both beneficial and unfavorable events that could possibly derail the strategy or strategies.
2. Specify trigger points. Calculate about when contingent events are likely to occur.
3. Assess the impact of each contingent event. Estimate the potential benefit or harm of each contingent event.
4. Develop contingency plans. Be sure that contingency plans are compatible with current strategy and are economically feasible.
5. Assess the counter-impact of each contingency plan. That is, estimate how much each contingency plan will capitalize on or cancel out its associated contingent event. Doing this will quantify the potential value of each contingency plan.
6. Determine early warning signals for key contingent events. Monitor the early warning signals.
7. For contingent events with reliable early warning signals, develop advance action plans to take advantage of the available lead-time (David, 1999, p. 294).

CORE COMPETENCE LEADERSHIP. Pitts and Lei define as a:

...set of strategic management ideas that place emphasis on a firm's ability to distinguish itself from competitors by means of investing in hard-to-imitate and specific resources (e.g., technologies, skills, capabilities, assets, and management approaches) (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 468).

Core competencies can relate to any strategically relevant factor (Strickland, 1998). Hitt states core competencies are any important internal activity that a firm performs better than other important internal activities (Hitt, 1999). Core competencies are central to a firm's competitiveness and profitability. It may be expertise in performing an activity, detailed understanding of a

particular technology, or a combination of skills that result in a valuable capability. It is usually the result of collaboration among different parts of the organization. Tied to the ability of firms to learn, it typically resides in a firm's personnel and tends to be grounded in skills, knowledge, and capabilities (Hitt, 1999).

CORPORATE CULTURE. Managers should recognize the strong relationship between a firm's culture and strategy. Strickland defines culture as the "firm's values, beliefs, traditions, operating style, and internal work environment" (Strickland, 1998, p. 335). David comments on the important task of integrating strategy and culture:

Organizational culture captures the subtle, elusive, and largely unconscious forces that shape a workplace. Remarkably resistant to change, culture can represent a major strength or weakness for the firm. It can be an underlying reason for strengths or weaknesses in any of the major business functions (David, 1999, p. 143)

David states how culture can inhibit strategic management in two basic ways:

First, managers frequently miss the significance of changing external conditions because they are blinded by strongly held beliefs. Second, when a particular culture has been effective in the past, the natural response is to stick with it in the future, even during times of major strategic change (David, 1999, p. 144).

Strickland offers seven suggestions on how to foster a strategy-supportive culture:

1. A stakeholders-are-king philosophy that links the need to change to the need to serve the long-term best interests of all key constituencies.

2. An openness to new ideas.
3. Challenging the status quo with very basic questions: Are we giving customers what they really need and want? How can we be more competitive on cost? Why can't design-to-market cycle time be halved? What new competitive capabilities and resource strengths do we need? How can we grow the company instead of downsizing it? Where will the company be five years from now if it sticks with just its present business?
4. Creating events where everyone in management is forced to listen to angry customers, dissatisfied stockholders, and alienated employees to keep management informed and to help them realistically assess the organization's strengths and weaknesses.
5. Persuading individuals and groups to commit themselves to the new direction and energizing them to make it happen despite the obstacles.
6. Repeating the new messages again and again, explaining the rationale for change, and convincing skeptics that all is not well and that fundamental changes in culture and operating practices are essential to the organization's long term well-being.
7. Recognizing and generously rewarding those who exhibit new cultural norms and who lead successful change efforts-this helps expand the coalition for change. (Strickland, 1999, p. 351).

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS. "Small units that work across a wide range of functions, technologies, products, and services based in different parts of the firm" (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 464). Many firms are currently decentralizing to compete in fast cycling markets. One innovative solution is the creation of the cross-functional or product-team structure. Pearce explains how this structure works:

The product-team structure assigns functional managers and specialists (e.g., engineering, marketing, financial, R&D, operations) to a new product, project, or process team that is empowered to

make major decisions about their product. The team is usually created at the inception of the new product idea, and they stay with it indefinitely if it becomes a viable business. Instead of being assigned on a temporary basis...team members are assigned permanently to that team in most cases. This results in much lower coordination costs and, since every function is represented, usually reduces the number of management levels above the team level needed to approve team decisions (Pearce and Robinson, 2000, p. 408).

The product teams ability to make rapid decisions in some cases has eliminated the need of one or more management layers above the team level. In some cases, those additional management layers were also making these decisions with less "firsthand understanding of the issues involved than the cross-functional team members" (Pearce, 2000, p. 408).

EMPOWERMENT. The business world is in a process of transitioning from "authoritarian, hierarchical structures to flatter, more decentralized structures that stress employee empowerment" (Strickland, 1999, p. 285). Strickland explains the new preference for leaner management structures and empowered employees is grounded in three tenets:

1. With the world economy moving swiftly from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge/Information/Systems Age, traditional hierarchical structures built around functional specialization have to undergo radical surgery to accommodate greater emphasis on building competitively valuable cross-functional capabilities.
2. Decision-making authority should be pushed down to the lowest organizational level capable of making timely, informed, competent decisions.

3. Employees below the management ranks should be empowered to exercise judgement on matters pertaining to their jobs (Strickland, 1999, p. 285).

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING. The "gathering of information about external conditions for use in formulating strategies" (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 465). Firms need to monitor their external environment continually. Many different types of scanning occur. Broad-based scanning attempts to identify new trends in the macroenvironment; industry-level scanning is more specific in scope; and competitor intelligence gathering seeks to gain the maximum amount of information obtainable legitimately about competitors. Information can be gathered from many public sources, such as periodicals, books, computer databases, and trades shows (Pitts and Lei, 2000).

FIRST MOVER. The "benefits that firms enjoy from being the first or earliest to compete in an industry" (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 465). Strickland points out the advantages and disadvantages of being a first-mover:

Sometimes the first major brand in the market is able to establish and maintain its brand name at a lower cost than later brand arrivals-being a first-mover turns out to be cheaper than being a late-mover. On other occasions, such as when technology is developing fast, late purchasers can benefit from waiting to install second- or third-generation equipment that is both cheaper and more efficient; first-generation users often incur added costs associated with debugging and learning how to use an immature and unperfected technology (Strickland, 1998, p. 171).

FIVE FORCES MODEL (PORTER). In his 1985 book, *Competitive Advantage*, Michael Porter introduces his now famous Five Forces Model (Figure 5). Pitts and Lei state:

Porter's *five forces* model is one of the most effective and enduring conceptual frameworks used to assess the nature of the competitive environment and to describe an industry's structure (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 35).

Porter believes that the nature of competitiveness in any given industry depends on the following five forces: 1) Threat of New Entrants, 2) Bargaining Power of Firm's Suppliers, 3) Bargaining Power of Firm's Customers, 4) Threat of Substitute Products, and 5) Intensity of Rivalry Among Competing Firms.

Pearce and Robinson state, "The corporate strategists goal is to find a position in the industry where his or her company can best defend itself against these forces or can influence them in its favor" (Pearce and Robinson, 2000, p. 85).

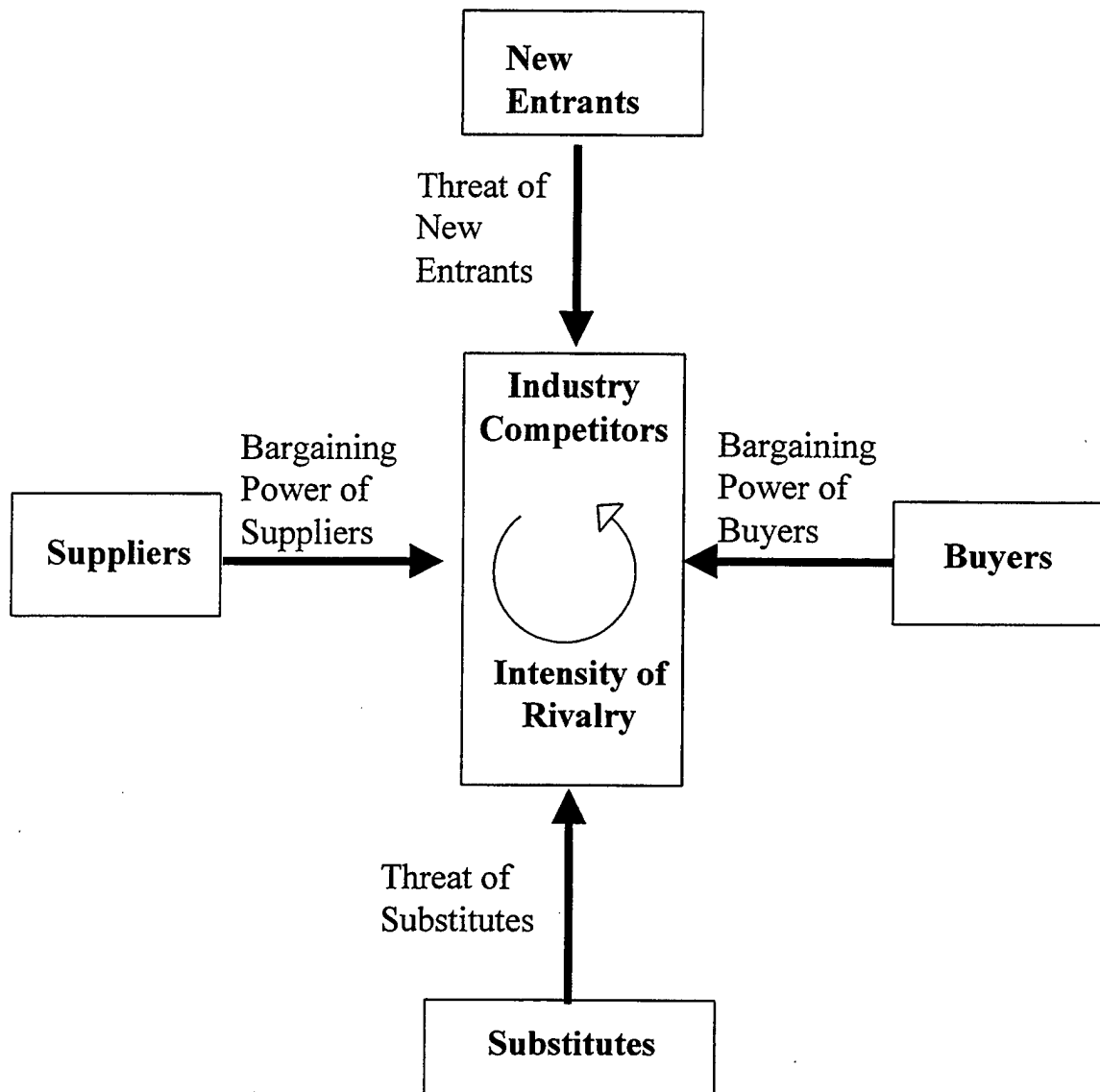


Figure 5. Five Forces Model

FLEXIBLE MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS (FMS). Hitt, Ireland, and

Hoskisson define FMS as:

A computer-controlled process used to produce a variety of products in moderate, flexible quantities with a minimum of manual intervention (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson, 1998, p. 150).

FMS allows a firm to change from making one product to another. It can help a firm become more flexible to customer needs. It is considered a significant technological advance that allows firms to produce a large variety of products at a low cost (Hitt, 1998).

GAME THEORY. In their Harvard Business Review article, *The Right Game: Use Game Theory to Shape Strategy*, Brandenburger and Nalebuff state that Game Theory is a "systematic way to understand the behavior of players in situations where their fortunes are interdependent" (58). They state the primary insight of game theory is the importance of focusing on others. They believe that managers can benefit from these insights by designing a game that is right for their firm. The rewards that can come from changing a game may be greater than those from maintaining the status quo.

They discuss one common mindset- seeing business as war. In this view others have to lose for you to win. They accept that there will be times when you want to opt for a win-lose strategy. But they believe that sometimes it may be best to let others, including your competitors do well- the win-win strategy. They list several advantages:

1. Because the approach is relatively unexplored, there is a greater potential for finding new opportunities.
2. Because others are not being forced to give up ground, they may offer less resistance to win-win moves, making them easier to implement.

3. Because win-win moves don't force either player to retaliate, the new game is more sustainable.
4. Imitation of a win-win move is beneficial, not harmful (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1995, p. 59).

GENERIC STRATEGIES. In his 1980 book, *Competitive Strategy*, Michael Porter introduced his three generic business strategic approaches to outperform other firms in an industry: Cost Leadership, Differentiation and Focus. He argues that in order to gain competitive advantage, firms must choose a strategy appropriate to the industry environment. He proposes three generic strategies:

1. **Cost Leadership.** This strategy aims at being the low-cost producer in an industry. The cost leadership strategy is realized through gaining experience, investing in large-scale production facilities, using economies of scale, and carefully monitoring overall operating costs.
2. **Differentiation.** This strategy involves the development of unique products or services, relying on brand/customer loyalty. A firm can offer higher quality, better performance, or unique features, any of which can justify higher prices.
3. **Focus.** This strategy seeks to serve narrow market segments. A firm can "focus" on particular customer groups, product lines, or geographic markets. The strategy may be one of either "differentiation focus," whereby the offerings are differentiated in the focal market, or "overall cost leadership focus," whereby the firm sells at low cost in the focal market. This allows the firm to concentrate on developing its knowledge and competence (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, Lampel, 1998, p. 104).

GENETIC DIVERSITY. Over the past decade:

...a major emphasis on diversity has pushed business organizations to improve their records at both hiring and promoting minorities and women into top management positions" (Bourgeois, 1999, p. 327)

Bourgeois states that the economic value of demographic diversity is the possibility that it will also lead to greater cognitive diversity by introducing more divergent and contrarian points of view into the organizations. He goes on to state:

Thus, employees who bring new and diverse points of view to an organization expand or enlarge companies' "gene pools," and Hamel and Prahalad argue that more than a few companies are in need of "gene replacement therapy." Managers who fail to promote demographic diversity in their firms may be missing a major opportunity to realize economic benefits by recruiting employees with new viewpoints and understandings. Equally at fault are the managers who promote demographic diversity but then fail to tap divergent points of view within their ranks (Bourgeois, 1999, p. 328).

GLOBALIZATION. One of the most significant forces shaping the business world today is the globalization of business activity (Bourgeois, 1999). It is defined as "viewing the world as a single market for the firm; the process by which the firm expands across different regions and national markets" (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 465). David states strategic decisions are made based on their impact upon global profitability of the firm, rather than on just domestic or other individual country considerations (David, 1999). Strickland lists six reasons why global markets are appealing:

1. One or more nationally prominent firms may launch aggressive long-term strategies to win a globally dominant market position.

2. Demand for the industry's product may pop up in more and more countries.
3. Trade barriers may drop.
4. Technology transfer may open the door for more companies in more countries to enter the industry arena on a major scale.
5. Significant labor cost differences among countries may create a strong reason to locate plants for labor-intensive products in low-wage countries (wages in China, Taiwan, Singapore, Mexico, and Brazil, are about one-fourth those in the United States, Germany, and Japan).
6. Firms with world-scale volumes as opposed to national-scale volumes may gain important cost economies (Strickland, 1999, p. 87).

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. Defined as:

The management function of staffing, also called personnel management, includes activities such as recruiting, interviewing, testing, selecting, orienting, training, developing, caring for, evaluating, rewarding, disciplining, promoting, transferring, demoting, and dismissing employees, and managing union relations (David, 1999, p. 149).

Top managers realize human resource management plays a strategic role in helping the firm learn and build new types of competitive skills (Pitts and Lei, 2000). When accomplished successfully, it enables the firm to cultivate the skills necessary for competitive success.

HYPERCOMPETITION. A term developed to capture the realities of a newly emerging competitive landscape. This definition found in the Hitt, Ireland and

Hoskisson book was quoted from Richard D'Aveni's 1994 book, *Coping with Hypercompetition*. D'Aveni states that hypercompetition:

...results from the dynamics of strategic maneuvering among global and innovative combatants. It is a condition of rapidly escalating competition based on price-quality positioning, competition to create new know-how and establish first-mover advantage, competition to protect or invade established products or geographic markets, and competition based on deep pockets and the creation of even deeper pocketed alliances (D'Aveni, 1994, p. 46).

D'Aveni believes firms in fast moving markets succeed by disrupting the status quo and creating a continuous series of temporary advantages. Firm's gain the initiative, by employing a strategy he labels the "New 7-S's": Superior Stakeholder Satisfaction, Strategic Soothsaying, Speed, Surprise, Shifting the Rules of Competition, Signaling Strategic Intent, and Simultaneous and Sequential Thrusts. D'Aveni states that many firms today must destroy their competitive advantages to gain advantage. He believes long-term success depends not on a static, long-term strategy, but on a dynamic strategy involving the creation, destruction, and recreation of short-term advantages.

INNOVATION (INSTITUTIONALIZING). Many managers today are trying to institutionalize innovation into their business processes. This is because few managers and employees naturally welcome change. One method of institutionalizing change is through product development. Traditional product planning efforts typically begin to design new products after demand for old

products falls. At this point, firms have already missed opportunities, and may even lose ground to new products developed by more proactive rivals.

To overcome this problem, many companies are adopting planning strategies that attempt to institutionalize innovation in their product developing efforts. For example, companies like 3M and Rubbermaid require a certain percentage of each year's sales to come from products that did not previously exist. At Sony, when they introduce a new product, they also specify a date when the next generation of that product will be introduced (Bourgeois, Duhaime and Stimpert, 1999). Policies of ongoing change may help prevent managers from concluding that they've "learned enough."

LEARNING COMPANIES. In his popular 1990 book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge states the following concerning learning organizations:

The new view of leadership in learning organizations centers on subtler and more important tasks. In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models-that is, they are responsible for learning (340).

He believes that it is no longer sufficient to have one person "figure it out" from the top, and have everyone else following orders of the "grand strategist." The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be "the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at *all* levels in an organization" (Senge, 1990, p. 4).

In their 1993 book, *The Learning Edge*, Wick and Leon state the new role of leaders is not just to focus on results but to create learning organizations. They believe organizational learning and professional growth are key to gaining competitive advantage. They argue that in the business world today, the focus is shifting from classroom training and mentor-based development to on-the-job training. They cite a growing body of research which suggests that the most effective development for managers and white-collar professionals occurs not in the classroom but through the experience of the job itself. They also cite a quote from John W. Gardner's 1990 book, *On Leadership*, where he states that industry continues to turn to leadership off-site training programs and graduate degrees for executive development. Gardner states, "But where leadership development is the goal, the most effective arena for growth continues to be the workplace" (173).

In their 1998 book, *Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management*, Eden and Ackerman make an interesting distinction between organizational learning and individual learning. They state that organizational learning "sustains and develops distinctive competencies which belong to the organization and to no individual or group within the organization" (75).

LEARNING CURVE. Defined as the "cost reductions that occur from continuous repetition of activities that allow for improvement with each successive act (also known as economies of experience or experience curve effects) (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 467).

MISSION STATEMENTS. Mission statements are "enduring statements of purpose that distinguish one business from other similar firms. A mission statement identifies the scope of a firm's operations in product and market terms" (David, 1999, p. 9). Strickland points out that there is also a place for mission statements with key functions and support units. He believes that every department can benefit from a consensus statement spelling out its contribution to the company mission, its principle role and activities, and the direction it needs to be moving (Strickland, 1999).

NETWORK ORGANIZATIONAL FORM. Defined as an:

Organizational format in which firms try to balance stability with flexibility through less reliance on traditional organizational structures. Network organizations typically de-emphasize a high level of vertical integration and foster closer cooperation with other firms to perform value-adding activities (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 467).

Pearce and Robinson believe the network structure has vast implications for managing in the next century. They argue the new rules of competition demand organizations to be "built on change, not stability, organized around networks, not a rigid hierarchy; based on interdependence of partners, not self-sufficiency; and constructed on technological advantage, not old-fashioned bricks and mortar" (Pearce and Robinson, 2000, p. 428).

OUTSOURCING. Outsourcing is the "purchase of a value-creating activity from an external supplier" (Hitt, 1999, p. 110). Hitt states the major reason outsourcing

is now used is that few, if any, firms have the resources and capabilities required to achieve competitive superiority in all primary and support activities. Hitt suggests when outsourcing, firms should seek the greatest value. They should outsource only to firms possessing a core competence in terms of performing the primary or support activity that is being outsourced. Hitt warns that firms should be careful not to outsource capabilities that are critical to their success, even though the capabilities are not actual sources of competitive advantage. Strickland states that outsourcing makes sense whenever:

1. An activity can be performed better or more cheaply by outside specialists.
2. The activity is not crucial to the firm's ability to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and won't hollow out its core competencies, capabilities, or technical know-how (outsourcing of maintenance services, data processing, accounting, and other administrative support activities to companies specializing in these services has become commonplace).
3. It reduces the company's risk exposure to changing technology and/or changing buyer preferences.
4. It streamlines company operations in ways that improve organizational flexibility, cut cycle time, speed decision-making, and reduce coordination costs.
5. It allows a company to concentrate on its core business (Strickland, 1999, p. 159).

REENGINEERING. Defined as the, "complete rethinking, reinventing, and redesign of how a business or set of activities operate" (Pitts and Lei, 2000,

p.468). Hamel and Prahalad believe reengineering is not the complete answer to today's business problems. They state:

It is not enough for a company to get smaller and better and faster, as important as these tasks may be; a company must also be capable of fundamentally reconceiving itself, of regenerating its core strategies, and of reinventing its industry. In short, a company must also be capable of getting different (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994, p. 16).

SCENARIO PLANNING. In his 1985 book, *Competitive Strategy*, Michael Porter states:

Scenarios are a powerful device for taking account of uncertainty in making strategic choices. They allow a firm to move away from dangerous, single-point forecasts of the future in instances when the future cannot be predicted. Scenarios can help encourage managers to make their implicit assumptions about the future explicit, and to think beyond the confines of existing conventional wisdom. A firm can then make well-informed choices about how to take the competitive uncertainties it faces into account (Porter, 1985, p. 446).

Mintzberg comments that scenario building is no simple business. He states two common problems are deciding how many scenarios to build, and what to do with them once several have been built (Mintzberg, 1994). Porter suggests five basic approaches under scenarios:

1. **Bet on the most probable scenario.** This is the most common approach. Firms design their strategy around the most likely scenario.
2. **Bet on the "best" scenario.** Firms design their strategy around the scenario that produces the best outcome.

3. **Hedge.** Firms choose a strategy that produces the best outcome under all possible scenarios. Usually produces a strategy not optimal for any scenario.
4. **Preserve flexibility.** This strategy chooses to preserve flexibility until it becomes apparent which scenario will actually occur.
5. **Influence.** In this approach, a firm attempts to use its resources to bring about a scenario that it considers desirable. The firm tries to influence the causal factors behind the scenario variables (Porter, 1985, p. 474).

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS. "Stakeholders are the individuals and groups who can affect and are affected by the strategic outcomes achieved and who have enforceable claims on a firm's performance" (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 1999, p. 26). Although businesses have a dependency relationship with their stakeholders, they are not dependent on all stakeholders at all times. Thus, all stakeholders do not have the same influence. One challenge strategists face is to "either accommodate or find ways to insulate the organization from the demands of stakeholders controlling critical resources" (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 1999, p. 26).

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES. In their 1998 book, *Alliance Advantage*, Doz and Hamel state:

No company can go it alone. For industry giants and ambitious start-ups alike, strategic partnerships have become central to competitive success in fast-changing global markets. More than ever, many of the skills and resources essential to a company's future prosperity lie outside the firm's boundaries, and outside management's direct control. In this new world of networks,

coalitions, and alliances, strategic partnerships are not an option but a necessity (ix).

They further observe that:

Strategic alliances are a logical and timely response to intense and rapid changes in economic activity, technology, and globalization, all of which have cast many corporations into two competitive races: one for the world and the other for the future (xiii).

STRATEGIC CONTROL. "Entails the use of long-term and strategically relevant criteria by corporate-level managers to evaluate the performance of division managers and their units" (Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson, 1999, p. 400).

STRATEGIC GROUPS. "A group of firms in an industry following the same or a similar strategy along the same strategic dimensions" (Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson, 1999, p. 72). This concept is popular when analyzing an industry's competitive structure. Strategic group analysis helps in the selection of an industry's structural characteristics, competitive dynamics, evolution, and strategies that historically have allowed companies to be successful within an industry (Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson, 1999).

STRATEGIC INTENT. Strategic intent is the leveraging of a firm's internal resources, capabilities, and core competencies to accomplish the firm's goals in the competitive environment (Hamel, 1989). A Company exhibits strategic intent when it relentlessly pursues an ambitious strategic objective and concentrates its competitive actions and energies on achieving that objective. Some argue that

strategic intent provides employees with the only goal worthy of personal effort and commitment, "to unseat the best or remain the best, worldwide" (Hamel, 1989, p. 33). The time horizon underlying a company's strategic intent is long term. Often a company's strategic intent takes on heroic character such as Komatsu's motivating battle cry of "Beat Caterpillar" or Honda's "Yamaha wo tsubusu" ("We will crush, squash, slaughter Yamaha") (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994, p. 141).

SWOT/TOWS ANALYSIS. Pitts and Lei define as:

Shorthand for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; a fundamental step in assessing the firm's external environment; required as a first step of strategy formulation and typically carried out at the business level of the firm (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 469).

Strategists analyze the strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats for configurations that benefit or do not benefit a firm's efforts to achieve strategic competitiveness (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 1999). The key objective is to determine how to position the firm so it can take advantage of opportunities, while avoiding environmental threats. Results from a SWOT analysis yield valuable insights into the selection of strategies a firm should use to achieve strategic competitiveness (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 1999).

SYNERGY. Synergy exists when the value created by business units working together exceeds the value those same units create when working independently (Hitt, 1999). David states that synergy is the $2+2=5$ effect. The belief is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. He believes that synergy can result in

powerful competitive advantages and that the strategic management process itself is aimed at creating synergy in an organization (David, 1999).

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM). Pitts and Lei define as, "the cultivation and practice of quality in every person's tasks and activities throughout the organization" (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 470).

UNCERTAINTY. In their 1997 article, *Strategy Under Uncertainty*, Courtney, Kirkland and Viguerie argue that uncertainty requires a new way of thinking about business strategy. They propose a framework for determining the level of uncertainty surrounding strategic decisions and for tailoring strategy to that uncertainty. They believe the uncertainty facing most strategic-decision makers falls into one of four levels:

1. Clear-enough Future.
2. Alternative Futures.
3. A Range of Futures.
4. True Ambiguity.

They observe:

At the heart of the traditional approach to strategy lies the assumption that by applying a set of powerful analytic tools, executives can predict the future of any business activity clear enough to allow them to choose a clear strategic direction. In relatively stable businesses, that approach continues to work well. But it tends to break down when the environment is so uncertain that no amount of good analysis will allow them to predict the future.

Levels of uncertainty regularly confronting managers today are so high that they need a new way to think about strategy (Courtney, Kirkland and Viguerie, 1997, p. 72).

They suggest that managers need a more comprehensive strategy tool kit in order to make the kinds of analysis appropriate to high levels of uncertainty. They recommend the following:

1. Scenario Planning.
2. Game Theory.
3. System Dynamics.
4. Agent-Based Models.
5. Real Options.

VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS. In his 1985 book, *Competitive Advantage*, Porter introduces the value chain (Figure 6):

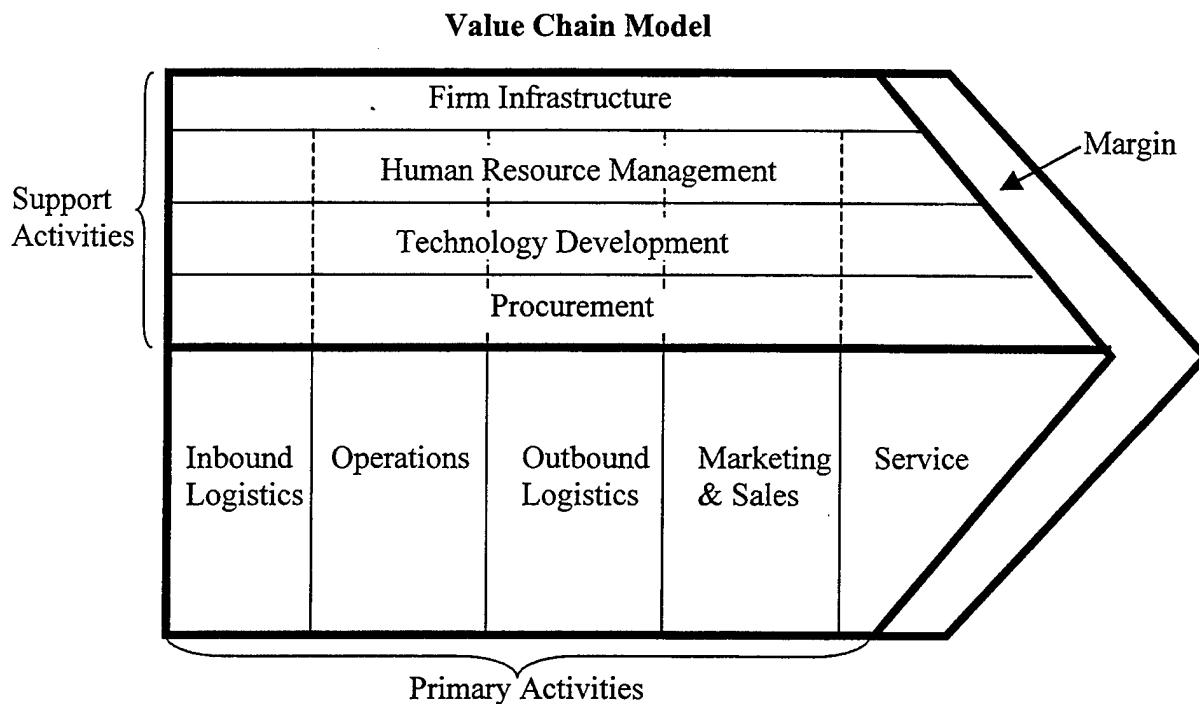


Figure 6. Value Chain Model

The value chain disaggregates a firm into its strategically relevant activities in order to understand the behavior of cost and the existing and potential sources of differentiation. A firm gains competitive advantage by performing these strategically important activities more cheaply or better than its competitors (Porter, 1985, p. 33).

Porter believes that to diagnose competitive advantage, it is necessary to define a firm's value chain for competing in a particular industry. The value chain is the primary analytical tool of strategic cost analysis.

VISION/STRATEGIC VISION. Defined as, "The highest aspirations and ideals of a person or organization; what a firm wants to be. Vision statements often describe the firm or organization in lofty, even romantic or mystical tones" (Pitts and Lei, 2000, p. 470).

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APPENDIX B. CONCEPT DEFINITION SHEETS

LEADER OF MARINES

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my Naval Postgraduate School thesis. Here is some background information concerning my study:

Purpose: This thesis suggests that current concepts in the field of business strategic management may be useful to Marine leaders. **The purpose of this thesis is to identify the applicability of three selected business strategic management concepts at the battalion level of command within the United States Marine Corps.**

Background: The field of strategic management has become a vibrant area of business research. Strategic management can be defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives. Strategic management is the capstone course for the systems management curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School and for many other business programs across the country.

Sample: This study is based on telephone interview responses received from a sample of Marine leaders who are currently or have experienced battalion-level command.

Interview Procedures: The interview procedure consists of two parts:

1. Review the three strategic management concepts attached to this cover letter.
2. Conduct the telephone interview. During the interview, I will ask the following questions for each concept:
 - a. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command? (Yes/No)**
 - b. **If no, why not?**
 - c. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**

- d. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps? (Yes/No)**
- e. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine Leaders? (Yes/No)**
- f. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the Battalion level of command?**

(Not Valuable/Valuable/Very Valuable)

Your name will not appear in the thesis. I will ensure complete anonymity of all information you provide me. I will record a summary of your responses in my raw data section. Therefore, I respectfully request permission to record the telephone interview. The thesis will conclude with my analysis and recommendations concerning the applicability of these concepts at the battalion level of command.

Points of Contact: Your time and insights are greatly appreciated! Points of contact are Captain Robert H. Willis Jr. at (831) 643-1704 (rhwillis@nps.navy.mil) or thesis advisor, Prof. Nancy Roberts at (831) 656-2742 (nroberts@nps.navy.mil).

BASIC CONCEPT #1: CORE COMPETENCE LEADERSHIP

In their article, *The Core Competence of the Corporation*, Hamel and Prahalad believe that real advantage is found in management's ability to consolidate corporate wide technologies and production skills into competencies that empower firms to adapt quickly to changing opportunities.¹ In their later book, *Competing for the Future*, they define core competency as "a bundle of skills and technologies that enables a company to provide a particular benefit to customers."²

Specific examples of core competence are miniaturization at Sony, logistics management at Federal Express and effective organizational structure at Pepsi. These carefully selected core competencies provide these firms with the flexibility to adapt rapidly to changing environments while maintaining market leadership.

Not all resources and capabilities within a firm are core competencies. Core competencies emerge over time through a process of organizational learning. Core competencies are strategic assets. They are developed to serve the long term. Although a firm may have many resources, capabilities and competencies, they can usually have no more than three or four core competencies.

Strickland quotes four traits concerning core competence from James Quinn's 1992 book, *Intelligent Enterprise*:

1. Core competencies rarely consist of narrow skills or the work efforts of a single department. Rather, they are composites of skills and activities performed at different locations in the firms value chain (a systematic way of examining all the activities a firm performs and how they interact) that, when linked, create unique organizational capability.
2. Because core competencies typically reside in the combined efforts of different work groups, and departments, individual supervisors and department heads can't be expected to see building the overall corporation's core competencies as their responsibility.

¹ Hamal, G., and C. Prahalad, *The Core Competence of the Corporation*, *Harvard Business Review*, May, 1990.

² Hamel, G., and C. Prahalad, *Competing for the Future*, Harvard University Press, 1994.

3. The key to leveraging a company's core competencies into long-term competitive advantage is concentrating more effort and more talent than rivals on deeping and strengthening these competencies.
4. Because customers' needs change in often-unpredictable ways and the know-how and capabilities needed for competitive success cannot always be accurately forecasted, a company's selected bases of competence need to be broad enough and flexible enough to respond to an unknown future.

Strickland states that the multiskill, multiactivity character of core competencies makes building and strengthening them an exercise in (1) managing human skills, knowledge bases, and intellect, and (2) coordinating and networking the efforts of different work groups and departments.³ For the core competence perspective to take root in an organization, the entire management team must fully understand and participate in five key management tasks: (1) identifying existing core competencies, (2) establishing a core competence acquisition agenda, (3) building core competencies, (4) deploying core competencies; and (5) protecting and defending core competence leadership.

³ Strickland, T., *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases*, McGraw-Hill 1998.

BASIC CONCEPT #2: SCENARIO PLANNING

Scenario planning is a disciplined method for imagining possible futures. It is based on the assumption that if you cannot predict the future, then by speculating upon a variety of them, you might open up your mind and even, perhaps, hit upon the right one.⁴ It is an old tool that has recently regained popularity in the business world. One reason is the poor track record many business leaders have in making assumptions about the future when uncertainty is involved. Another is the immense uncertainty associated with globalization and the increasing rate of technological change. Many organizations are now spending huge efforts in order to construct scenarios.⁵

Scenario planning captures and assesses the impact of uncertainties in an organization's external environment over some future time period. Usually developed in sets, each scenario describes the behavior of a collection of key uncertain factors. The collection of scenarios is intended to capture the range of possible future developments.

The classic example of successful scenario planning is the case of Royal Dutch/Shell. In a 1985 article by Pierre Wack, the Harvard Business Review summarizes:

By listening to planners' analysis of the global business environment, Shell's management was prepared for the eventuality-if not the timing-of the 1973 oil crisis. And again in 1981, when other oil companies stockpiled reserves in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, Shell sold off its excess before the glut became a reality and prices collapsed.⁶

Wack explains that to be effective, decision scenarios must involve top and middle managers in understanding the changing business environment more intimately than they would in the traditional planning process:

Scenarios help managers structure uncertainty when (1) they are based on a sound analysis of reality, and (2) they change the decision makers' assumptions about how the world works and compel them to reorganize their mental model of reality. This process entails much more than simply designing good scenarios. A willingness to face uncertainty and to understand the forces driving it requires an almost

⁴ Mintzberg, Henry, Bruce Ahlstrand and Joseph Lampel, *Strategy Safari*, The Free Press, 1998.

⁵ Mante-Meijer, E, and Muriel Abeln, *Fun with Scenarios*, Long Range Planning, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1998.

⁶ Wack, Pierre, *Scenarios: uncharted waters ahead*, Harvard Business Review, Sep-Oct, 1985.

revolutionary transformation in an organization. This transformation process is as important as the development of the scenarios themselves.

Scenario planning is applicable in almost any situation a decision-maker would like to imagine how the future may unfold. The advantage of scenario planning is that managers are forced to acknowledge the possibility of a variety of different outcomes. Because they are involved in the development of different sets of strategies, managers are forced to consider a much broader range of alternatives. This reduces the tendency for managers to become attached to a single course of action.

BASIC CONCEPT #3: STRATEGIC INTENT

In their 1989 Harvard Business Review article, Hamel and Prahalad introduce the term "strategic intent:"

On the one hand, strategic intent envisions a desired leadership position and establishes the criterion the organization will use to chart its progress. Komatsu set out to "Encircle Caterpillar." Canon sought to "Beat Xeros." Honda strove to become a second Ford-an automotive pioneer. All are expressions of strategic intent.

At the same time, strategic intent is more than simply unfettered ambition. (Many companies possess an ambitious strategic intent yet fall short of their goals.) The concept also encompasses an active management process that includes: focusing the organization's attention on the essence of winning; motivating people by communicating the value of the target; leaving room for individual and team contributions; sustaining enthusiasm by providing new operational definitions as circumstances change; and using intent consistently to guide resource allocations.⁷

Strategic intent is a tangible goal; it is a destination that can be described. The time horizon underlying it is long term. Ambitious firms may pursue it relentlessly, sometimes even obsessively, over a 10- to 20-year period.⁸ It lengthens the organization's attention span and provides consistency to short-term action, while leaving room for reinterpretation as new opportunities emerge.

Strategic intent implies a sizable stretch for an organization. It creates an intentional misfit between resources and ambitions. This forces the organization to be inventive. Top management challenges the organization to close the gap by systematically building new advantages:

In this respect, strategic intent is like a marathon run in 400-meter sprints. No one knows what the terrain will look like at mile 26, so the role of top management is to focus the organization's attention on the ground to be covered in the next 400 meters.

⁷ Hamal, G., and C. Prahalad, Strategic Intent, *Harvard Business Review*, May-June, 1989.

⁸ Strickland, T., *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases*, McGraw-Hill, 1998.

Firms achieve progress through issuing challenges; each specifying the next key advantage or capability to be built. One year the challenge may be quality, the next cycle time, and the next mastery of a new technology, etc.

Strategic intent assures consistency in resource allocation over the long term. Clearly articulated challenges help focus individual effort in the medium term. Competitive innovation helps reduce competitive risk in the short term. This consistency in the long term, focus in the medium term, and inventiveness and involvement in the short term provide the key to leveraging limited resources in pursuit of ambitious goals.

Strategic intent should be personalized. Each employee should understand how his or her work contributes towards its achievement. It is as much about creating meaning for employees as it is about establishing direction.⁹ Employees should have a personal scorecard that directly relates their job to the challenge being pursued. They should have a specific measure of their own performance that links their individual achievement with the firm's strategic intent.

⁹ Hamel, G., and C. Prahalad, *Competing for the Future*, Harvard University Press, 1994.

APPENDIX C. RAW DATA

A. CORE COMPETENCY LEADERSHIP

1st Marine Leader (Author, Tactician and Planning Theorist)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
The concept has utility. What I am not pleased about is its internal focus. It focuses on what I do well, the problem is that in a combat environment, the enemy is not always going to give you that option. I think it is important to know what you do well and what you don't do well and to try to play to your strengths and bolster your weakness, but ultimately you must focus on the enemy. What you can do to him vice focus on yourself. I am not a great fan of this concept. It may be different in a support environment. When dealing in a combat environment with a hostile will, you don't have the luxury to play to your own strength.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command.** Valuable although it has limited utility. I wouldn't recommend using the term or teaching people how to explicitly do it. I think it is a concept already covered in current Marine Corps leadership. It is good to realize what things you do well and play to your strengths. Know your strengths and exploit them, beyond that it starts to lose utility and brings you towards an internal focus which is dangerous.

2nd Marine Leader (Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined?** Yes, I have. **Can you explain?** I am not the biggest visionary there ever was, but I'd like to think that I try to see as long range as I can. To the best of my ability, I've been trying to do this for the last 20 years. There are some things that I believe we do well and we need to focus on those and we have to trust the guy on the left or right to do his part of the deal. Whatever term we call it; that is the local buzzword they are using out in Camp Pendleton where I just came from. It was a great time to be a battalion commander where folks were talking about this. Cause I was just giggling everyday thinking "wow" this is great to be doing the things now that I was thinking about as a lieutenant. Didn't know to call it core competency back then, it was just "what's my real job and I better be good at my real job and that stuff that is not my real job trust the guys who have it to do it. Yes, we did it and exercised it on a daily basis in my Headquarters and Service Battalion. Even though we were not an "operational" battalion, we were in the sense that our job was to do the core competency things that the other battalions don't have. For example, field mess- is this a competency of an engineer support battalion?, motor transport battalion? No, that's not what they do. Let's let them focus on what they do and scrape up all those cats and dogs put them in a HQSVCBN, and that is our core competency. We developed two core competencies: to provide flexible headquarters support for the FSSG headquarters as well as flexible general CSS support for the battalions within the FSSG and to provide crisis action teams. Battalions outlast the life span of the commander. Anything I can do to help this: the notion of bringing in a commander for 18-24 months is to me a blink of the eye. Core competencies can't work if you change the leadership every 18 months. Core competencies must be established by higher command. You can't let a transient personality reinvent them every 18 months. It can be fine-tuned or looked at from a different perspective, but a core competency is the reason why that unit exists and that should be the long haul perspective.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. It's just leadership. Core competency to me is just another buzzword. It is a leadership tool, a process, an equation by which you run through the various projects, taskings, missions, assignments, and while it is executed at the battalion level, I firmly believe it should be driven at the higher headquarters level. The FSSG staff is where the core competency functions take place. The battalion level is execution, but the FSSG staff designates.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes. Absolutely, right from TBS.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable. I do think the transient nature, particularly now when we are understrength and overworked and people tend to ricochet around the Marine Corps at the cyclic rate bouncing from one task to another, works against us. I see this concept as the writing etched on the wall that says this is who we are, this is what we do, this is what this battalion does, what we do and how we fit together. Bottom line though is it needs to come down from above.

3rd Marine Leader (Former Communications Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes. Definitely, without question.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** As defined...basically a core competency is a common thread throughout the organization that might be a combination of skills throughout the organization. As specifically defined...no. I focused our efforts on developing competencies in a specific MOS-a stove pipe kind of thing. So no, I did not apply it as defined.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. But you have to get people to understand it. A lot of Marines in my community (0602 Communications and Information Systems Officer) look to core competencies as a key issue with respect to addressing the outsourcing issue. A lot of people think they

understand the term core competency, but in a lot of cases what they are doing is stove piping it. We don't need programmers in the USMC, we don't need Comm center operators in garrison, we can outsource that. So I don't think within the Marine Corps people really understand that a core competency is a thread throughout an entity or organization or even throughout the Marine Corps. For example, a core competency of acquisition professionals at MARCORPSYSCOM. There would really have to be a change in paradigm for that to occur, but I think the value resulting from it would be exceptional. Currently I work in a very volatile and dynamic environment, we are on duty 365 days a year, we never stop. It is interesting taking an approach such as this, given the diminishing technical and human resources we have, it might give us an ability to tie together and make better advantage of the limited resources we have. Currently we stove pipe and cross over a little bit, but I don't think we get a common thread throughout.

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?** Yes. Definitely. Before I took over my Communications Battalion, I came straight out of the Command and Staff College, so I was up to right up to speed on end states, centers of gravity, and critical vulnerabilities. It is interesting trying to apply that in a Communications Battalion where, yes...we can define end states but we are a service provider, we are not a killer.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable. My initial thought is that it would be more valuable in your service-oriented battalions such as a supply, maintenance, engineer, or support battalion. As for an infantry or artillery unit, I'm not sure how it would fit. I think if I gave it more time, I could probably come up with a way.

4th Marine Leader (Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?** Yes. My perspective in from a Headquarters and Service Battalion and now from the formal schools side. From the academic side...we are going that way with core competency skills. They are trying to teach that in MOS producing schools.

2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** I think that is what the fleet wants. They would rather get them sooner with core competencies, than later with detailed training. The fleet can train newcomers the way they want them. The fleet may find they are getting people who are overtrained, when they would rather get someone fast who is trainable. The backbone is that every Marine is a rifleman, everybody across the board is trained to be a rifleman first. That would be the core competency of the Marine Corps. We take it further and I guess you could call it core plus when they receive additional specialized training. That is why we send them to additional MOS schools. In the fleet, we are doing more of the core plus, on the job training, to train for a specific job.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?** Yes. It is already out there.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?** Yes. Leaders need to be familiar with it so that they understand what the Marines will be arriving with.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very valuable at all levels of command. The commanders need to have an understanding of what they are getting.

5th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?** Yes. Out of the three I think this is the most applicable.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** Any time that I look at these basic concepts. If they have anything to do with the basic leadership traits, principles and skills that you have that are MCCRES standards. To be honest with you, at a battalion level we are talking tactical, even at the division level. We have certain standards to be met. So probably this would apply. Making sure that your people are proficient and that on the staff level making sure you are capable of coordinating all of that in a

combined arms mode. And that they are competent to do rapid planning for crisis situations; combined arms and rapid planning were some of the main core competencies I focused on as an infantry battalion commander.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. I think some of these fall in the same vein as TQL. In the military there are some business practices that can be applied in commodity areas but at the battalion level, I don't think any other buzzwords are needed. I think that just good tactical and technical proficiency and those leadership traits and principles that we have had for years and years and years are plenty good enough. We just confuse people when every commander that comes in has some new buzzword that he wants to throw on leadership.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable. Obviously the concept is beneficial but it is just renaming something that is already covered.

6th Marine Leader (Former Air Station Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** I was an air station commander. At any level of command, core competencies are relevant. Several come to mind such as tactical core competency, and then sub competencies; leadership, etc. Things that can be applied to all levels of command.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. I think it already has been. The commandant this year has initiated a study this year on core competency for officers. I think it is a term that's well recognized and to a certain extent is already being used. There was a study done with some reserve officers. There has been a lot of work recognizing core competencies.

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.

6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable. Really at all levels, certainly at the battalion.

7th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.

2. **If no, why not?** I think we already have a similar system in place using the mission essential task list concept for training.

3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.

6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. There is already a similar process in place.

8th Marine Leader (Current Motor Transport Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.

2. **If no, why not?**

3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
Very simply it is a matter of setting out priorities and giving each and every member of the battalion the tools that they need to be successful in carrying out their priorities. The key is that the higher headquarters clearly defines the goals. The first thing that comes to my mind is crisis action. It's done here on a daily basis.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. It is relevant today. In the 2nd FSSG a lot of folks understand the core competency basis but I think it is a glamorization of things we already do on a daily basis.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable.

9th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** But only in the sense that its organic to all parts of being in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps competencies, I don't see any specific infantry/battalion core competencies that are not already embedded in those in the Marine Corps. You have your training standards and MOS manual which outlines who should be able to perform what at what level and all the other task condition standard training tools that we have as well as MEU-SOC/MCCRES training standards. So you really are not in a position to define your own. A commander of course will emphasize things more than others. Your flexibility is limited.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. At the battalion level, I think it will conflict and confuse what we already do.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. I think we all do it instinctively as part of our culture. I think going with different levels of competency will only confuse.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable.

10th Marine Leader (Current Marine Corps Planner)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** We already do this to a degree; maneuver warfare, combined arms, I think those are considered core competencies by all. I am a Marine Corps programmer. One thing that caught my eye is methods to deal with change. I thought this concept could work.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable

11th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** From my perspective, it's similar to saying that every unit needs a theme to hang onto and this is one way of saying that...for example in my unit, General Brute Krulak saying that Marines must know how to fight, all else is secondary. Our core competency focus is warfighting.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. I think we have it already. If not the term, General Krulak used it in his campaign plan. That was the first we began to hear about core competency.

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. I think we do it-already covered in Leadership traits and principles.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable.

12th Marine Leader (Current Supply Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes. Core competence leadership is clearly applicable, as it is oriented on tactical competencies.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** We primarily worked with Core Competence Leadership at 3d Supply Bn – applied it pretty well as written with a focus on the ability to deploy and the ability to work in your MOS outside of a garrison environment. The challenge to applying it as stated was the high degree of personnel turnover.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. Because we have two primary functions today: Deploying from a CONUS base and working in our MOS (as an element of a MAGTF) in some far and distant place. We must deploy before we can employ.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes. This is a topic for TBS through MCWAR, with a like focus in NCO School through Advanced SNCO course.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very valuable. It precludes you wasting time trying to select your goals and focus.

B. SCENARIO PLANNING

1st Marine Leader (Author, Tactician and Planning Theorist)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.

2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** I like this concept. I am familiar with the Royal Dutch Shell guys and the scenario planning school. I think we need to do more of this in the military. We have a tendency to try to predict what the enemy will do. I think it is more valuable to try to wargame several enemy scenarios. My comments are in the context of what we currently advocate. The current Marine Corps planning process is very time consuming so this is not more time consuming than what we currently do. I think it is valuable for the commander to get involved in these decisions. It should be a top down process, the commander giving the basic guidance and making fundamental decisions. The fact that he doesn't have time to is no indictment of scenario planning. What I think we ought to do is take a scenario planning approach to wargame one course of action against a broad range of possible enemy actions.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?** Yes.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?** Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Recommend using the term and teaching people how to do it. Very valuable.

2nd Marine Leader (Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?** Yes. Absolutely. I feel like you have been following me around.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** Scenario planning, old-fashioned term: branches and sequels. The gamesmanship of "what if" if we do this and that happens are we prepared to take advantage of that. You can take this to day to day opportunities. You need to talk about it. We use to do this every

week in the battalion. Mostly it was informal. It needs to be a part of our ethos (dare I say in the officers club) and discuss opportunities if they present themselves and what can we do so we are ready. Be ready to respond. I don't think we do enough of that, we seem to be too busy. We need to do it to program our mental faculties. It takes time to make time. It doesn't have to be a full staff, a CO, XO, SgtMaj, Adj, S-3 and S-4. A half-hour every few days and you get a discipline and you can crank out a couple of branches and sequels a day. It helps to share your intent with the staff. It warms the oil, a staff member can say I remember the colonel saying if this happened I should do that. You are training people to think.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. Although I think we already have a term; branches and sequels. It might be used as the general call sign.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes, right from TBS.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable. A million dollars plus. I had the largest battalion in the FSSG, my staff consisted of all 1st or 2nd lieutenants. My S-3 was a Gunnery Sergeant. You have to build this into them and you get an indescribable dividend.

3rd Marine Leader (Former Communications Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
Yes, pretty close. We supported a great deal of MEF, joint, and combined exercises with other countries. At the time, you don't call it scenario planning. I think the infantry calls it "branches and sequels" where you think about different scenarios that can occur and you make sure that you can cover a spectrum of them focusing your limited resources on those with the greatest probability of occurring. That is what we would do, we would take three or four bad scenarios that could occur and work out solutions. I don't know

if we knew what kind of planning we were doing but it was informal. When you are a service provider, failure is not an option. In other words, what we do for exercises, is what we do for a real world undertaking.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps.**
Yes. It is military enough that people won't become upset with it. It doesn't smell too much of business stuff.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes. Not just at Command and Staff, but at Amphibious Warfare School and maybe an introduction at The Basic School. Work it up the chain. Put an introduction into the Staff Academy. Concerning development of long-term thinking. I think the closest thing we have concerning training for long-term thinking is the campaign plan at Command and Staff. I was a captain at HQMC doing planning and systems analysis and we didn't really look out more than a year. Being at the headquarters for awhile and being where I am now, it is my opinion that Marines do strategic planning very poorly. I think part of it is because we as Marines have always "poor mouthed" ourselves to the point of almost our own demise. We are so short on resources and are so busy trying to keep the alligators at bay that the first thing that is put aside is strategic planning. So, if we do get it right, it is because we are lucky.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable. The idea that you are addressing possible outcomes, maybe assigning a probability to it, and considering alternatives to those, its worthwhile.

4th Marine Leader (Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes. Minimal, usually at higher echelons, such as operational plans.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
Yes, informally. What if type discussions. I think you'll find we

have that for different regions of the world, MSTP has that for staff planning.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable. In the sense that the Battalion level needs an understanding of it. We as a battalion don't develop Oplans for scenario planning, on a large scale at the strategic level, but we do play an active role in it in providing input, it is usually held at the MSC level or above.

5th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** We do this in wargaming certain courses of action. If a commander gets his staff and visualizes what types of operations he will be involved in: 1 year or 18 month training cycle, we need to train for these scenarios. Then I can see where this type of scenario planning can be beneficial. When we wargame, we try to "what if" everything that we think would effect our accomplishment of the mission, friendly and enemy. For example, what happens if we don't get host nation support for water. Or if we plan for a NEO and plan for a permissive environment, then it gets uncertain, then it gets hostile, what will we do. What happens if a key leader goes down in a helicopter. There is a formal model for planning. Usually what you want to do is designate someone as a red cell that will play the enemy. Then you use your expertise of people sitting around the table to inject events, things that could happen based on experience, and then you react to them. But first you exercise what the enemy reaction will be to your action, always realizing that every action has a reaction. In rapid planning, this may be a quick conversation. If

you have time to wargame a scenario one or two days out then you can get more involved with a sand table wargame.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. I think we have enough terms right now that allow us what we need to do.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. I think it is already being taught under another name: wargaming.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable. Anytime you can spend looking at the future would be valuable. If you wanted to call it a scenario planning session then that would work. But using it as a guiding concept for your battalion command, no, it is just a part of it.

6th Marine Leader (Former Air Station Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** I think at the battalion level, even though at times you face an uncertain future, I think the amount of effort you would put into developing scenarios in my view is more applicable at higher commands.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. I think we do it already under a different name. Higher levels do a lot of scenario development. The equivalent at the battalion level would be "what if" discussions. I think an informal process is more applicable, short of developing formal scenarios and accessing. I think that is the operational level.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes. At the appropriate level. I think the planning horizon for battalion level commands is around 2 years. For an Air station or base level, I think three to five years is an appropriate planning timeframe. I think a lot of the training for long-range thinking is gained through experience.

6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command? Valuable.**

7th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** I believe there is already a similar process in place.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. Not at the battalion level. They may want to cover at the higher levels.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command? Not Valuable.**

8th Marine Leader (Current Motor Transport Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** This is like the kumbaya planning process, I don't think you can capture everything in the process. If you brainstorm every variable and option, they vary with opinions and everybody's got one. The TQL concept is there, but ultimately somebody has to make the decision, in here it seems that everyone is on an equal plain and it's a brainstorming session.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.

6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. I think it is not a novel idea. I think we already do it. I think in our business we need a goal, a means to achieve it, and a hierarchy to set the tone and pace.

9th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** Part of it deals with including junior leaders and decisionmaking...we do that in wargaming or courses of action (COAs) on exercises, deployments, or making decisions on how to spend money. I think it is a wonderful thing at a higher level. I don't see it being useful at the battalion level. A long-term in the battalion is 18 months. Your pretty locked in to the things you have to do and scenarios just don't lend themselves to giving you a long-term focus on something that is already laid out for you to do.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable.

10th Marine Leader (Current Marine Corps Planner)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** I looked at it as along the lines of wargaming, dealing with uncertainties with the external environment. Here is the connection and applicability. I've never seen a formal process done effectively at the battalion level. Its all been informal. I think there is a time

investment. The battalions I've been in, you may do it once or twice formally at the most. Where I am now, we use the Mission Area Analysis scenarios. We are using those right now in our planning process, we are looking at the Marine Corps across the board, we call it a health assessment, looking at our capabilities, determining where we are strong, where we are weak, to help justify our decisions on what to buy. Part of that is down at Quantico, at the combat development system where they have done six or seven scenarios and we are using those scenarios to help justify our health assessments. I believe they go out to about the year 2008.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable.

11th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** There is no time...plans are built by headquarters higher than you. At the battalion level, you can't see that far into the future, you don't have that much control. I say no at the battalion level except in the context of courses of action in planning. If we are doing it in the context of gaming and shaping next years training for instance, then for a sum period of time you live with multiple courses of action of which you haven't selected one yet, then you pick one of them. I don't see developing scenarios for major possibilities, only in the sense of courses of action concerning MAGTF-type planning issues.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. Already covered. Courses of action.

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. Already taught-MAGTF staff planning.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable.

12th Marine Leader (Current Supply Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** Scenario planning is more oriented to the MAGTF staff (MEU to MEF, with a greater focus on the MEF)
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not valuable.

C. STRATEGIC INTENT

1st Marine Leader (Author, Tactician and Planning Theorist)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
Long-term is a relevant thing. Why is a battalion in the middle of an operation worried about 5-10 years down the road. Strategic intent reminds me of a training program with objectives etc. There may be a problem in the USMC. Should there be separate strategic intents for each infantry battalion in the USMC? Or should we just say that an infantry battalion should be able to do these basic things? Is there that much latitude for a battalion commander to have a unique

strategic intent. I agree it is not an exact analog to commander's intent. But seems to me there are other, tried and true concepts that are a part of the USMC that cover all of that.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Limited value. I wouldn't recommend using the term or teaching people how to explicitly do it. In this case I think the military concepts are already covered in current Marine Corps practice so why use a new term. We already have the idea of intent.

2nd Marine Leader (Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** The 10-20 year period is too far out. You should have a 1 or 2 year plan. I have a lot of experience trying to execute someone else's plan. I do agree with a lot of principles of this stuff. You have to have that vision, not just how do I get through to 1630. Beyond surviving the day to day, but where are we going to be 5 years from now. I think the timeline is too far out. I think you have to have a clear vision; 5 years at most. I think it needs to be articulated to everyone, everyday. Marines need to be energized and fired up in order to reach your intent because they get caught up in the day to day. You need someone to say look up, you see that hilltop, that is where we are going, follow me. You have to remind them, not just follow an order to "get there in 5 years." You have to live it. I took a shorter view of your concept as defined. More realistic is a 1 or 2 year plan.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. I think there needs to be a vision, every unit at the battalion

level ought to have a 2 year plan updated every fourth quarter. Not just the simple things such as training etc, but to be thinking about structure, personnel, new equipment. For example, V-22 and AAAV, what will this do to our units? How will we utilize this new equipment?

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes. Wrap this up with core competencies and scenario planning. You should have a core competency, a strategic goal (2-3 years at most at the battalion level), and within that, what can we do to achieve the strategic intent now.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable.

3rd Marine Leader (Former Communications Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
Yes, 100 Percent. But not 10-20 years. I've done this for the last 5 years, the 2 years at my battalion and the 3 years I've been here. We have done strategic planning and it is a long and involved process. We went through a process, we redefined our mission, came up with a vision and guiding principles, and then we would come up with strategic thrusts or choices. Those were all based on an extensive amount of research, communication with the customers, accessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), and it would be based on a vision of where we felt the organization was going. Few do this in the Marine Corps. What we did was I took my battalion officers (I called them the executive leadership committee) and I took them offsite and paid for a class. We had a professional come in and teach us. I did it for my battalion and have been doing it here for three years. I'm pretty good at it, but again, one of the quickest paths to failure is to think you know something. So, I've always made it a point to bring in an independent agent to walk us through the process. But for all five times, I had to bring in an outsider, because you can't talk this kind of stuff in the military

they don't understand it. It's not a common practice in the USMC. I do it, it is personality based, I think it is the way to do it.

4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. But, with it goes an understanding of what it takes to craft a strategic intent and then to transition that into something useable; goals, directions, strategic choices, etc.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes, definitely.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Very Valuable. Crucial with the long-term being defined as up to 2 years. I don't think our Marine ethos allows a strategic intent to go beyond the tour of the commander. Each commander is his own commander and the continuity doesn't exist to do that.

4th Marine Leader (Former Headquarters and Service Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** To many intangibles to relate too. You can't have individual scorecards to track performance. We need to train as a team. On the civilian side, I think it creates individualism because bonuses are driven by that. If the end state is the teams accomplishments, and the team get rewarded with a bonus then I think there is some merit there. And then the members of the team must have a say, so if Fred is not contributing then get a replacement.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. In theory yes but in reality no.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No. It focuses too much on the individual.

6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. I think were it is valuable is on recruiting duty. That is an individual thing, you're recognized and promoted or individually relieved.

5th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** Anytime I see strategic and battalion in the same sentence I think they just don't jive. I think I know what they are trying to say here; strategic intent being "commander's guidance" is what we would call that. So I think that would be more applicable at the battalion level. The vision at the battalion level is to gain the core competency and get through the training hurdles and lay out the plan that gets us to the next step because each thing is not that much different from battalion to battalion. What we do have is the divisions commanders campaign plan. The vision can encompass more than a battalion. Those are the guiding principles. And those usually sustain themselves through several cycles of commanders. When you get down to the battalion level, because the staff changes so much and you only have between 18-24 months, you want to make your mark, but you don't want to upset the applecart of things that are working well. So the commander that left, I look at his commander's intent and guidance and tweak it a little bit, you don't want to completely turn it around unless you have to. Strategic intent I see more at the division, MEF and combatant commander's level. I would entitle it commander's vision, guidance or commanders intent at the battalion level.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. Not at the battalion level. Strategic Intent might be applicable at higher levels. I think you may find that it is listed as the campaign plan.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes. I think we could teach it at the Marine Corps War College were do war strategy and policy. But to call anything strategic to

teach to company or field grade level not at the CINC level you are in danger of inflating what they are doing far beyond what it is.

6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. As named you would definitely confuse lieutenants with strategic intent that would be way over their head. I think there are a few levels of training for long-term thinking. In a battalion you have about a year of continuity to train up for your six-month deployment. Your vision for what you want to emphasize and what you want to ensure you are competent in and what you would take risk in being not quite as skilled in. That's what you work with. As a battalion commander, you have your own Marine Corps traits and principles.

6th Marine Leader (Former Air Station Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
The planning horizon at the battalion must be shorter term; 12-18 months. Now at Headquarters elements such as at the Combat Development Command we have 10-15 year planning horizons. On the support side, such as at a base or air station, it is very important to have a strategic intent. Their planning horizons are further out than battalions. Because it just takes so long to get resources to make a change and you can't be changing things all the time, you have to have a plan and stick with it.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes. But again, I think it is being used in other terms at certain levels.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable. If you tailor the planning horizon to an appropriate time 12-18 months.

7th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** Because of the short training cycle. The battalion training cycle is between 18 and 24 months depending on where you are. You have a very set number of mission essential tasks to train for. And what also happens too is that as soon as a battalion gets back, you may have an extremely well trained battalion but within a month after the unit gets back you flush 50% and so the battalion almost starts from zero again with its training. So you really can't look out to the long-term because of the short-term focus caused by personnel turnover.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. Not at the battalion level.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. The battalion is not a strategic organization, they are a tactical one. You must focus on the 18 to 24 month cycle, if the commander doesn't do that he won't get the job done. You're required to train to a certain number of tasks that higher headquarters figures that if the battalion gets committed based on current war plans this is what the battalion is most likely to do. And with limited training time and the hundred other ancillary taskings, if you don't focus on the mission essential tasks then you're not going to have a well trained battalion. The strategic level is MEF and above. Longer-term thinking comes with experience. Intermediate schools teach it at that level. This is appropriate because I don't want my company commanders looking to the strategic level, I need them focused on the tactical. Even I, as a battalion commander, didn't look strategically. MCO 3-0A 3-0B Unit Training Management Guide tells you how to train a unit and how far you should be looking out: battalions and below 18 months, regiment and above 24 months out. I think these are good baseline documents on what levels of training you should be focusing on.

8th Marine Leader (Current Motor Transport Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** Everything we do in this business is either hypothetical or what if. I think it is very tough. It's a fluid environment, one day I'm providing humanitarian relief in El Salvador, a month later, I'm in Norway. The dynamics are incredible. In this business there is only one priority. If you want to entice people, the fact is that you need some type of financial gain. We just don't do it like businesses do.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. Battalion-level commands have no reason to look beyond a 2 year planning period. I can barely plan past 12 months. I have no idea where I am going to be deployed, I can't depend on my staff because I don't know who is going to be here, there is no depth, there is no flexibility. If you incorporate the core competency then there is some longer-term planning that can be done.

9th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** 18 months is long-term planning, not at this level.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.

5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not Valuable. Maybe at the War Colleges or the Command and Staff level but not at the battalion level or regimental for that matter. I think that Marine Leaders should look longer than 18 months but only in limited ways, such as for the sake of broadening their own and their officer's education. But things in general are pretty much on autopilot; personnel, training packages, equipment, so many things are just a given. If you try to get out of the box too much you will only screw things up. A lot of Marine leaders never really develop a good long-term view. They are brought up accustomed to the close in fight maybe up to 2 years. A lot of leaders have a hard time making the leap getting out of the here and now. I don't think you can train somebody to be a long-term thinker. I think there are not a whole lot of out of the box thinkers, because we spend our whole life building a box and 9 out of 10 people who think they are out of the box thinkers aren't and those who are probably get passed over early and are out. We seem to be O.K. in that a few visionaries rise to the top; Pete Ellis, Zinney and Krulak. Enough rise up to take care of business. I don't think the battalion is the place to do that, although a good commander will take time out to expand his thinking. I do think we will have to do more of that in the future as we get ready to operate in an all OMFTS environment. What is acceptable or even done well today in terms of junior leader initiative and mission orders and operating independently will not be close to answering the mail 20 years from now.

10th Marine Leader (Current Marine Corps Program Planner)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** More useful at a higher level. I thought along the lines of OMFTS. In a battalion environment, I think the term is too long. This should be done at MCCDC rather than at the battalion level. Too much turnover and focus on the deployment cycle. When you are in a battalion you don't think long-term. This may be a problem later when long-term thinking is required. The visionaries are supposed to be the MCCDC people. I don't see it as being

prevalent with the actual warfighters. At the operational units I would say it is not occurring.

3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
Yes.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not valuable at the Battalion level.

11th Marine Leader (Former Infantry Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
Yes.
2. **If no, why not?**
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?** To the degree that it is tied to the higher headquarters strategic intent. At the battalion level I applied it as commander's intent. I think this would be a closer fit.
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No. Not in this context-commanders intent at the battalion level or Commandant's vision for the Marine Corps.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
Yes.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Valuable...to the extent of understanding higher headquarters intent. Concerning the issue of long-term thinking. I think in the growth of Marine leaders...as they move in their development from company grade, to field grade, to flag, there is a steady progression of experience and training that develops the long view. Career level school does a lot for the transition. I think a lot of the joint billets and training also helps. I suspect that some of the best learning involves training as action officers at the staff level. I

think the Marine Corps does a fairly good job of their long-term planning given the understanding that all else is secondary to knowing how to fight. If that is what we are living by, maybe we will flounder around with other things but it all comes down to can we and do we fight well. I think we do it well and better than anybody else. At MCCDC we are now looking at the Corps after next, so folks are thinking long-term, the institution does have a long-range focus and is doing it pretty well.

12th Marine Leader (Current Supply Battalion Commander)

1. **Is this concept applicable at the battalion level of command?**
No.
2. **If no, why not?** Strategic intent is conceptually applicable. However, USMC battalions are the 7-11 of national defense and cannot necessarily be limited to a single strategic focus for guidance.
3. **If yes, did you/do you apply it as defined? Can you explain?**
4. **Would you recommend adopting the term in the Marine Corps?**
No.
5. **Would you recommend teaching this concept to Marine leaders?**
No.
6. **How valuable do you think this concept is at the battalion level of command?** Not valuable at the battalion level of command.

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